

Wild

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

BUSHWALKING

Wandering
Victoria's parks
Bibbulmun Track
Misty Mountains,
north Queensland

Myles Dunphy
Paddling
Mt Everest

TRACK NOTES

Kosciuszko National Park's
Rams Head Range

GEAR SURVEYS

Bushwalking boots
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The grand muster of public opinion

Despite the rhetoric, the decision to end grazing in Victoria's Alpine National Park is a big win for the Australian environment

THE GREAT MUSTER OF PUBLIC OPINION CONTINUES throughout the streets of Australia, its soundtrack marching hooves, the cracking of stockwhips and music from *The Man from Snowy River*. The debate surrounding the High Country grazing rights of some 50 Victorian families seems to have eclipsed almost every other recent environmental campaign. About 600 people rode to the Victorian Parliament in June to protest against the end of alpine grazing and seemed to receive substantially more press coverage than the 2004 rallies to end old-growth logging in Tasmania in which more than 25 000 people marched Australia-wide. Of course, horses make great props (just ask Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell) and are far more photogenic than images of poisoned native animals and destroyed bush. But it is not surprising that people have sympathy for the cattlemen; their lifestyle and legend are reminiscent of a simpler time and have been mythologised into becoming part of the 'Australian identity'. However, the debate should not be about emotion, backed up by poems, movies and rhetoric, but instead about conserving what little remains of Australia's wild places.

Cattle grazing is detrimental to the High Country in many ways: hard hooves damage stream-beds, springs and fragile alpine moss beds and the cattle pollute the water, contaminating the headwaters of eastern Victoria's major water catchments; trampling increases erosion and—in conjunction with grazing—threatens alpine flora and fauna, of which more than 300 species are already protected or threatened; and the cattle spread weeds. (See Green Pages in *Wild* no 91 for more information.) The claim that 'grazing reduces blazing' was debunked last year while another recent study found more than 1.7 million cow pats in one section of the Alpine National Park. The scientific evidence supporting the removal of cattle from the High Country is unequivocal and goes back more than 50 years. It also appears to be irrefutable: none of the arguments for cattle grazing seem to confront the damaging aspects of the tradition. Instead they use the 'yes, but' argument: yes, but it's a part of Australian heritage; yes, but we know the land. No one argues with the science.

Cattle grazing may be part of Australian heritage but so are many things, such as indentured labour and the 'White Australia' policy. No one laments the demise of this 'heritage' although at the time its cessation

may have been unpopular. So it will be with alpine grazing.

It is interesting to note the differences between the 'spin' for this issue and old-growth logging: logging has been practised in Australia for longer than cattle grazing and is still allowed in every State. No one argues that this practice needs to be protected for its heritage values—instead, that argument is all about jobs. However, as the grazing issue affects far fewer people there is nothing else to use but the pull of emotion: there just isn't another argument.


In addition to the negative impact that alpine grazing has on the environment, it is

the debate should not be about emotion...but instead about conserving what little remains of Australia's wild places.

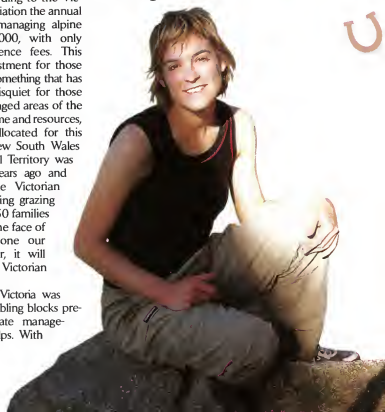
also very expensive. According to the Victorian National Parks Association the annual taxpayer-funded cost of managing alpine grazing is around \$500 000, with only \$30 000 returned in licence fees. This amounts to subsidised agistment for those who have alpine licences, something that has been causing increasing disquiet for those who don't. Repairing damaged areas of the Alpine Park will also take time and resources, with \$650 000 already allocated for this task. Alpine grazing in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory was stopped more than 40 years ago and similar protection for the Victorian Alps is long overdue. Taking grazing licences away from about 50 families is hardly going to change the face of modern Australia, let alone our cultural identity. However, it will make a big difference to the Victorian Alps.

Alpine cattle grazing in Victoria was also one of the main stumbling blocks preventing effective cross-State management of the Australian Alps. With

this hurdle gone, consistent conservation management has moved a step closer. The State Governments of Victoria, NSW and the ACT have committed to working together for World Heritage listing for the area. A successful nomination would have a positive effect for the Australian High Country as a whole.

Conservation battles seem to be less about the issue and more about the side you're on—the old city-greenie/country-user divide. Conservationists are seen as elitist—old, out-of-touch city yuppies and their young, freshly dreadlocked university-attending offspring trying to lock up Australia and stifle development, their demands costing money, jobs and destroying communities. This stereotype is pitted against that of the Aussie battler who is simply trying to make a living off the land, scraping by as they always have. However, it shouldn't be about income, education level or job descriptions: a quick examination of Australia's environmental issues should force us to realise that not only must we protect what is left and strive to undo damage that has already been done, but the environment should be a priority in every decision made despite the personal and nationwide sacrifices that this may entail. The decision to end alpine grazing in Victoria is a step in the right direction. 

Megan Holbeck
editorial@wild.com.au



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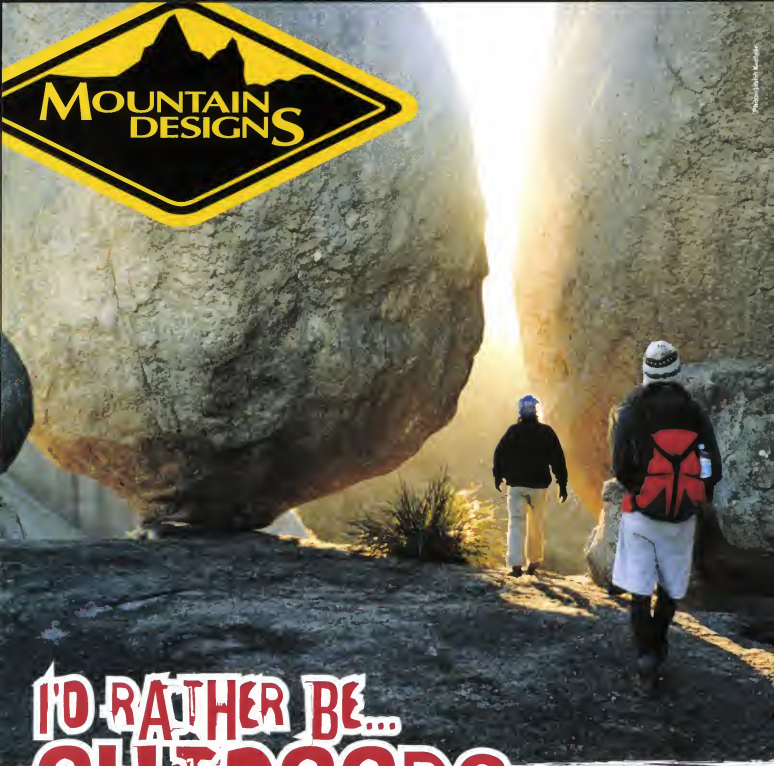
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Chris Baxter-tributes

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I WOULD LIKE TO THANK CHRIS FOR PROVIDING me and my friends with so much enjoyment and information over the years through *Wild*. I purchased the first edition and immediately became a subscriber and have been there ever since.

When you sit in an office all day it is hard to describe the excitement of the day the magazine arrives and you slowly flick through the pages thinking of what you could be doing as opposed to what you are currently doing.

I have managed to keep every copy apart from *Wild* no 11...and a slightly damaged no 10...The rest are in pristine condition.

I retire in two years and all those old editions of *Wild* will be revisited with much enjoyment.

I wish Chris all the best and hope that he can get on top of his illness.

Thanks again to him for changing my life.

Bob Rose
Scone, NSW

I am very sorry to hear that Chris is not well (Editorial, *Wild* no 97) and hope for his speedy recovery. I have read *Wild* for many years and appreciated greatly the support and coverage it gave us during and after the 1984 Mt Everest Expedition. Chris has been the father of outdoors writing and publishing in this country and we want more.

Geoff Bartram
Carwoola, NSW

Just read Chris's Editorial in the new issue. It reminded me to thank him for his encouragement over the last five or so years with my contributions to *Wild*. I was 21 and straight out of university when *Wild* published my first article. I have no doubt that it helped me find the confidence to keep taking risks. Just knowing that Chris succeeded in building an amazing business from nothing more than a good idea continues to inspire me...

In the strange, interconnected world in which we live Chris has been an influence on the path that I have taken. I want to thank him for being a positive one!

Andrew Hughes
Ulverstone, Tas

I received my copy of *Wild* last night and, as usual, immediately started to read it from cover to cover. I have never met Chris but *Wild* has been such an important part of my life for so long that I was shocked and upset when I learned of his fight with cancer. Many of the articles in *Wild* have helped me to attempt walks that I would never have con-

sidered otherwise and have enriched my life in a way that only the bush seems to be able to do. Thanks to Chris for a wonderful magazine, I have been quite changed by it. Best of luck to him...

Nick Valentine
Kallista, Vic

Thanks so much to Chris for *Wild* and all it has done over the years for so many of us.

I am sorry that he has been confronted with such an unexpected mountain and my best wishes go with him all the way to the summit. And I too hope to meet him on other summits to come.

Mike Dillon
Strathfield, NSW

Having just received *Wild* no 97 today and read Chris's Editorial, I wanted to express my thanks to him for such a superb magazine. I was still at school when I purchased *Wild* no 1 and I have been a subscriber ever since...I have...thoroughly enjoyed the many issues from no 1 to no 97 and was compelled to...express my thanks for Chris's dedication to *Wild* these many years.

Just as your magazine has over the years pointed to the frailty of our planet, so too are we frail, as sickness serves only too well to highlight...

Andrew McLachlan
North Parramatta, NSW

Sweet-talk about environmental balance, truth and distortion of the facts

Not content with whinging about the damage to Tasmania's fragile environment by 'mainland' walkers, David Harvey then ricochets off on to the 'green movement' and the 'exaggeration and distortion of the facts' about the island's slash-and-burn technology (Wildfire, *Wild* no 97).

As a leatherwood-honey producer for more years than I care to remember, I have seen the destruction of leatherwood-rich forests in southern Tasmania. The damage that the flawed technique of clear-fell and burn has inflicted on old-growth in the river valleys of the Arve, Picton and Weld defies description. Cable logging on the East Picton has brought the destruction to the boundaries of the World Heritage Area.

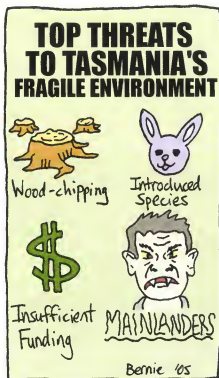
It can be said that my own 'personal exaggeration and distortion of the facts' are linked to the logging of 100 metre high *Eucalyptus regnans* in the Florentine Valley during the 1950s, when logs finished up at the Boyer Newsprint Mill for throw-away paper. In those long-gone days it was only

newsprint we had to worry about. Corporate greed now leads the way, ably assisted by the Tasmanian Government and Forestry Tasmania.

As for 'the relatively small areas' involved, perhaps a month of walking through the statewide 'regenerated' forests of Tasmania would convince even David Harvey of the 'true facts' of 'operation forestry disaster'.

In the meantime, and with every clear-felled coupe, Tasmania's iconic leatherwood-honey industry collapses, together with the last of the unprotected wet forests.

Norman Hoyle
Deloraine, Tas



Wild no 97 was great—I particularly enjoyed the discussions between those who advocate a 'balanced' approach of campaigning and others of a 'radical, left-wing University' bent.

I did think the coverage of hazard reduction in Wilsons Promontory was a bit one-sided (Green Pages, *Wild* no 97). I am sure that burn-offs in different areas of Australia have vastly different outcomes. But I can say that what National Parks has done in the Blue Mountains in the last few years has been of great benefit—instead of big, devastating fires we have had strategic small burns which may kill some animals but which are vastly better than the wildfires we experienced in 1994, 2001 and 2002.

So I hope the rabid left-wing conservationists curb their polemic and come to

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appreciate the improvements in fire management in the Blue Mountains and other areas that are unquestionably taking place.

Rick Jamieson
Grose Vale, NSW

Regarding Spikey Riddoch's letter about the angler-fish advertisement (inside back cover of *Wild* no 96; see Wildfire in the same issue): this advertisement also appeared in *Wild* no 97. Personally I was more worried about the massive and beautiful trees that were destroyed in the Gordon Dam on the opposite page than the name of a fish in an ad. By the way, did you notice that the other fish in the ad is a snapper—often found along the 22 metre line...in Port Phillip Bay—I don't know what that's doing at 2000 feet in the Monterey Canyon. It's an ad! Those trees must have looked awesome before the dam was built.

Jarrad Laird
Warrandyte, Vic

Home-grown help

I recently picked up my copy of *Wild* no 97 and when I went to the gear survey (waterproof jackets) I noticed that you had listed Wilderness Wear (WW) as made in China. Sadly, the vast majority of bushwalking gear is now made in China. However, WW is not and is made right here in Australia...

In my experience, all gear made in Australia is at least the equal of, and normally superior quality to, goods made overseas and is very competitively priced when compared to gear of an equivalent standard. It's about time people got behind companies like WW and One Planet that have persevered with Australian manufacturing.

Peter Hains
Wollongong, NSW

Wild no 96 and yet another tent review! Although read with interest they are getting a bit boring! I also consider them incomplete. There is only scant reference to the tent fabric and certainly no distinction made between the tents...why isn't water resistance quoted? After all it is an objective measurement...Other objective tests could be strength, stretch and rip resistance. Quality of sewed joint and waterproofing could be better reported...Reporting pole type for material, weight, strength and flexibility, quality of zips and fly screens could be vastly improved.

I'm sure good manufacturers would only be too happy to supply this information to have their products correctly compared...

Peter Ralph
Launching Place, Vic

Unfortunately, it's not that easy! Please see the box 'Wild Gear Surveys: what they are and what they're not' at the beginning of every survey. Editor

Readers' letters are welcome (with sender's full name and address for verification). A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au

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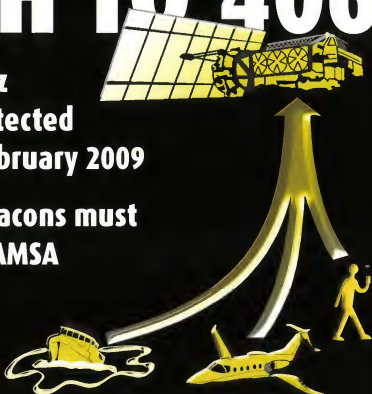
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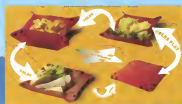
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RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Australian Championships in rogaining and mountain running were held this winter. Here's a round-up of events

David Rowlands reports that the 2005 'Over the Border' Australian Rogaining Championship was held on 21–22 May in the Queensland granite belt and south into the Maryland National Park of northern New South Wales. The superstrong Victorian/NSW pairing of David Rowlands and Mike Hotchkis blew away the competition with superb route choice. This is a record tenth Australian title for Rowlands, adding to his three World Championship trophies. Queenslanders Wendy Read and Thorlene Egerton won the women's section, while leading adventure racers Alina McMaster and Tom Landon-Smith easily retained their Mixed Open title.

The World Rogaining Championship will be held near Sydney in October 2006 and promises to be the most competitive rogaining event ever.

The 2005 World Mountain Running Championships are being held on 25 September in Wellington, New Zealand, prompting a very strong field to descend on the Australian Capital Territory for the Australian Mountain Running Championships on 18 June. John Harding reports that the course was made up of a 4.3 kilometre loop which included the summit of Mt Majura and added climbs in the pine-forested foothills to provide a 310 metre gain in elevation. Men ran three laps of the course and women, two.

Canberra's Scott McTaggart stamped himself as a strong prospect when he blitzed the men's race in 57 minutes. Former national champion David Osmond of the ACT was second in 60 minutes and 40 seconds, and New Zealand's Glenn Hughes followed 20 seconds later for third place.

Former national junior track, cross-country and triathlon champion Vivian Pott won the women's nine kilometre event in just over 48 minutes. National orienteering representative Hanny Allston of Tasmania was second in 49 minutes, 22 seconds, 11 seconds ahead of ACT triathlete Kirra Rankin, who was running despite a fractured rib. Allston's superb fitness allowed her to also finish third in the World Junior Orienteering Championships on 14 July.



Stuart Nicholas

**Farewell to a great character (and caver),
by Stephen Buntun**

Stuart Nicholas, one of the great characters of Tasmanian caving, died in his sleep mid-April aged 50. 'Stuee' played a pivotal role in the epic exploration of most of Australia's deepest caves during the heyday of Tasmanian caving from the early 1970s through to the 1990s. He was also an accomplished cave diver.

Nicholas was a stalwart of the Tasmanian Cavingmeering Club (TCC). He was the club's quartermaster and for more than ten years meetings were held at his house. He edited the TCC's newsletter, *Speleo Spiel*, for longer than that and also edited a number of other publications. Nicholas was the Tasmanian representative at Australian Speleological Federation meetings and held the position of vice-president for two years. He was one of the first Australians to use computers for publishing, and for reducing cave surveys. Cavers were forever dropping in to his place to get printed-out maps of their recent discoveries.

Nicholas was an electronics and maintenance engineer by trade. He had un-

canny technological know-how and was renowned for his abilities statewide, mostly in the medical-equipment servicing industry, in particular the Royal Hobart Hospital's recompression chamber and endoscope facilities. He was always exceedingly generous with his time, either in fixing old cars or solving computer problems. Other passions included rock music, jazz and rally-car driving—he was Tasmanian State Champion on several occasions. Stuart Nicholas's efforts are all the more incredible as he was an insulin-dependent diabetic from early childhood.

He was my closest caving friend but I will remember him most for his quick wit, quirky sense of humour and horrible puns. He made all of us laugh a lot.

Stuart Nicholas exploring Shish Kebab cave, Mole Creek, Tasmania, in the early 1980s.
Mike Martyn

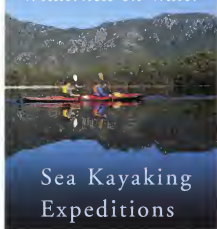
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**The season
so far**

**News from the national
cross-country ski team,
by Finn Marsland**

It is the middle of July as I write and to date the cross-country ski season has been nearly perfect. We've had the lot: spring snow; kilometres and kilometres of groomed tracks; some cold, dry snow; and even some good 'Australian powder'. The establishment of the National Team Training Centre at Falls Creek, Victoria, has been working out well. Fifteen members of the team attended the training camp in the first week of July and several national team members have moved to the area, ensuring a sizeable group for team training sessions.

There have been club races across the ski resorts in NSW and Victoria since the first weekend in July. On 16-17 July the first selection race for the national junior team was held in conjunction with the Victorian Junior Championships at Falls Creek. The 2005-2006 Australian team will be selected in September. Some names to watch for over the next few years include Aimee Watson from NSW, and Victorian Simon Flower. A team of three-five athletes is expected to be taken to the World Junior Championships in Slovenia next January.

The focus is on the Australian racing season at the moment as August is when it really takes off, but things are ticking along in preparation for the European season and qualification races for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy. At the moment seven Australian athletes will be attempting to qualify in World Cup races from October to January. Final selection for the Winter Olympic Team will be made after 24 January 2006. Cross-country skiing news and results from the Australian winter can be seen at www.hoppet.com.au/xc

*Athletes training during the
national team training camp
in July. David de Gama*

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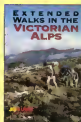
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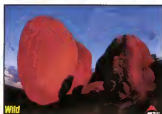
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SCROGGIN

Adventure Activity Standards

Adventure Victoria (AV) continues to lobby to have recreation removed from the scope of the Adventure Activity Standards. Rod Costigan reports that the Victorian Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE) recently acknowledged in a publication that commercial-sector lobby groups are pushing to have commercial licensing requirements imposed on recreational groups. While DSE rejects direct licensing of recreational groups, it acknowledges the alleged need for 'compliance and enforcement' by as yet unspecified means. AV has drawn the attention of the Minister for Environment to what it sees as inequity and conflict of interest within the licensing review process and is seeking a restructure.

Booking system for the Overland Track

Bookings for walking Tasmania's Overland Track in the peak season can now be made by calling (03) 6223 6047, online at www.overlandtrack.com.au or at Tasmanian Parks & Wildlife Service visitor centres. From November to April walkers will need to book, walk north-south and pay a fee of \$100. Bookings can be made up to a year in advance. The new regulations aim to reduce overcrowding and environmental impact on the area.

Resort for Wolgan Valley

Roger Lembit reports that a new luxury resort is being planned for the Wolgan Valley near Newnes on the western side of the Blue Mountains. The proposed site is in the valley between the World Heritage listed Wollomai National Park and Gardens of Stone National Park. The resort is to be in cleared farmland and the access road to Newnes, which is in poor condition and was washed out during floods in 1986, may have to be upgraded.

Yet more icy poles for Philips

Polar adventurer Eric Philips guided two Australians, Rob Porcaro and Matt McFadyen, for the final degree to the North Pole in April. The trio covered the distance—86 kilometres as the crow flies—in seven days. Porcaro and McFadyen are training for their forthcoming solo expeditions to the South Pole. Although the team completed the expedition without incident and in good health,

the North Pole season proved problematic for many expeditions with four teams being evacuated from the ice and many trekkers suffering facial frostbite from the constant winds.

Matt McFadyen (front) and Rob Porcaro en route to the North Pole. Eric Philips



Conservation groups are concerned that helicopter access to the resort may entail flights over the wilderness and canyon country in nearby parks.

Honour list for Geoff Mosley

Geoff Mosley was made a Member of the Order of Australia 'for service to conser-

vation and the environment through a range of national and international World Heritage list campaigns, and the introduction of conservation legislation' in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in June. Mosley is one of Australia's best-qualified natural environment campaigners and is at present working for World Heritage listing for the Australian Alps. 📷

More Australians summit Mt Everest

Despite long periods of bad weather, some climbers reach the top

Rex Pemberton became the youngest Australian to summit the world's highest mountain, reaching the summit during a two-day weather window in late May. According to the *Age* on 1 June, the 21-year-old is an experienced climber and waited at Base Camp for three months before making his ascent. On the same day 24 others reached the summit including three Victorian policemen, Greg Linsdell, Nick Farr and John Taylor. They dedicated their climb to the memory of fellow policeman Paul Carr, who died on Cho Oyu two years ago while training

for an attempt on Mt Everest. Paul Hockey, a one-armed climber, also reached the summit. It was his second attempt. Duncan Chessell, who first climbed the mountain in 2001, turned back 500 metres from the summit.

Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mt Everest, has joined Friends of the Earth in calling for the mountain to be placed on the endangered list of the UN's cultural body UNESCO. He says that warmer temperatures have led to severe flooding of glacial lakes, threatening the environment and local people.

CORRECTIONS AND AMPLIFICATIONS

Wilderness Wear jackets are made in Australia, not in China as stated in the Gear Survey on page 65 of *Wild* no 97. Three Peaks jackets are distributed by Three Peaks, not Wilderness Wear as stated on the same page. On page 18 the photographer's last name is actually Mouatt, not Moatt as printed.

Readers' contributions to this department, including high-resolution digital photos or colour slides, are welcome. Items of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Send them to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or email editorial@wild.com.au



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Wild Diary

Wild Diary listings provide information about rucksack sports events and instruction courses run by non-commercial organisations. Send items for publication to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181. Email editorial@wild.com.au

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- 17 JP Myall River Classic C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 17 Nightgaine 5 hr R ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
 17 6 hr R NT www.nt.rogaine.asn.au
 17 8 hr Championships R Qld www.qld.rogaine.asn.au/qraonline
 17 North Queensland 6/12 hr R Qld www.qld.rogaine.asn.au/qraonline
 17-18 AUMC 12/24 hr R SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
 17-18 State Championships 24 hr R Vic www.vic.rogaine.asn.au
 18 BSKC Winter Series Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au
 18 FACC Ted Pace Memorial C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
 24 LPKC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 7 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 24-25 Marathon State Championships C Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
 24-25 Nightgaine 8 hr R ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
 25 World Mountain Running Championships BR NZ www.wmr2005.org
 25 CCCC Winter Series Race 5 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au

October

- 1 Upper Murray Challenge M Vic www.uppermurraychallenge.dragnet.com.au
 1-2 LHCCC Brisbane Valley 100 C Qld www.canoeqld.org.au
 1-2 CCCC Bendigo Cup C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
 8 BSKC Winter Series Race 6 C Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au
 8 RC Ectuca Mini C Vic (03) 8327 7706
 8-9 Xstream Race C Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au
 8-9 State Championships 24 hr R Tas www.rtasn.au
 9 Ormvalley Valley Classic BR NSW jgharding@bigpond.com

- 12-13 Australian Schools Marathon Championships C WA www.wa.canoe.org.au
 15 Fitzroy Falls Fire Trail Marathon B BR NSW www.fitzroyfallsmarathon.com
 15 Metrogaine R Qld www.qld.rogaine.asn.au/qraonline
 15 6 hr R SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
 15 Spring 12 hr R WA <http://wa.rogaine.asn.au>
 15-16 Trailblazer Challenge B BR SA (08) 8232 6477
 15-16 Marathon World Championships C WA www.canoe.org.au
 15-16 State Championships 24 hr R NSW www.nswrogaining.org
 15-16 12 hr R Vic www.vic.rogaine.asn.au
 16 Great Australian Bushwalk B WA www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au
 16 CCCC Winter Series Race 6 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 22 RC Barwon Mini C Vic (03) 8327 7706
 22 Brindabella Classic BR ACT mick.corlis@tardis.com.au
 22-23 Hawkesbury Canoe Classic C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 30 CCCC Winter Series Race 7 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 29 Oct-1 Nov Bright Four Peaks Race BR Vic <http://brightalpineclimb.net.au>

November

- 5 Two Peaks Classic and Mt Majura Challenge BR ACT jgharding@bigpond.com
 5 Northern Marathon Series Race 7 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 5-6 Freycinet Lodge Challenge M Tas tasultra.org
 6 GCC Bridge to Bridge C Vic www.canoevic.org.au

- 12 WBOC NSW Winter Marathon Series Race 8 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 12 Spring 6/12 hr R ACT www.act.rogaine.asn.au
 12 Mirigaine 3 hr R SA <http://sa.rogaine.asn.au>
 19-20 GWOC Twin Rivers Classic C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
 20 CCCC Winter Series Race 8 C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 20 Socialgaine 6 hr R NSW www.nswrogaining.org
 26 SHCC Swan Hill Murray Classic C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
 27 Socialgaine 6 hr R NSW www.nswrogaining.org

December

- 3 Ben Ward Memorial 30 Mile C Vic www.canoevic.org.au
 10 Tasmanian Slalom and Wildwater Championships C Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au
 11 Black Mountain Challenge BR ACT www.mountainrunning.coolrunning.com
 11 CCCC Race and Christmas Party C NSW www.nswcanoe.org.au
 18 Tour de Mountain BR ACT mick.corlis@tardis.com.au
 27-31 RC Murray Marathon C Vic (03) 8327 7706

January 2006

- 4-18 Australian Wildwater Championships C Tas www.tas.canoe.org.au

February

- 4 Cradle Mountain Run BR Tas sus.drake@trump.net.au
 11-12 Upside Down 12 hr R WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au
 25-26 Yarra Descent C Vic www.canoevic.org.au

March

- 11 Autumn 6 hr R WA www.wa.rogaine.asn.au

Activities: B bushwalking, BR bush running, C canoeing, M multisports, R rogaining, S skiing **Organisations:** BCC Bendigo Canoe Club BSKC Burnie Sprint Kayak Club CCCC Central Coast Canoe Club FACC Footscray Amateur Canoe Club GCC Geelong Canoe Club GWCC Gippsland Waters Canoe Club JP Just Paddlers LHCCC Lourdes Hill College Canoe Club LPKC Lilli Pili Kayak Club RC Red Cross SKCC Swan Hill Canoe Club WBOC Waggie Bidgee Canoe Club **Rogaining events** are organised by the State rogaining associations **Canoeing events** are organised by the State canoeing associations unless otherwise stated

NEW HUTS STRATEGY FOR KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

Roger Lembit elaborates

Huts burnt down during the 2003 bushfires may be rebuilt following the completion of a report on their heritage values. The Huts Conservation Strategy draft report, written by heritage consultants Godden Mackay Logan, was released on 18 May.

The Kosciuszko Huts Association (KHA) welcomed the report, which in many ways addresses issues it has pursued for years. The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA) also supports the key policies expressed in the report and has committed to working with groups including the KHA to protect the natural and cultural heritage values of the park. However, NPA is still opposed to the rebuilding of huts in wilderness areas within the National Park.

Wilderness huts that the strategy recommends rebuilding include Boobee, O'Keefes and Pretty Plain huts. These huts

are all within the Jagungal wilderness: the recommendations are based on the strong cultural heritage values of the huts but don't consider their location within a wilderness area. The strategy states that Pretty Plain Hut should be rebuilt using the same log technique but could be a smaller building and still retain its significance.

Other huts nominated for rebuilding include Delaneys, Brooks, Patons and Broken Dam huts. Diane/Orange and Grey Hill Café huts weren't given support for rebuilding.

The National Parks & Wildlife Service is now considering submissions.



Pretty Plain Hut was destroyed during the summer 2003 bushfires. The recent report recommends that it be rebuilt. Roger Lembit

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Life and death in the chasm

Quentin Chester reflects on risk in the bush

DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF LAST SEPTEMBER seven friends went bushwalking in the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park. Spring is usually dry in the northern Flinders but when the group arrived rain squalls were sweeping the ranges. Given the conditions it was decided to do day-trips from a base camp instead of an extended walk. For some in the party it was their first visit to the area and the chance to encounter such a place with old friends made up for any vagaries in the weather. One of the group, Steve Hood, had walked in the ranges before. He was particularly keen to share his enthusiasm for the area and show the others some of the sights, including the gorge country.

Of all the ravines that cut into the eastern perimeter of the Gammon Plateau, the most celebrated is Bunyip Chasm (Winimindanha), a sheer-sided cleft that shoots to the sky. To reach the chasm you enter a small tributary of the creek system that drains the eastern flanks of Steadman Ridge. A series of rock steps and terraced waterfalls leads to a surprising amphitheatre of cliffs and crags. At the back of this enclosure stands the spectacular Bunyip Chasm, perched above a final wall of blocky sandstone. For all its seclusion and mystique, Bunyip Chasm is just four kilometres from the closest road access near Grindell Hut.

Late in their week away, while two of the group remained at their base camp, Steve and four others made the journey into the chasm. Though the party included experienced walkers they decided against making the final exposed climb into the chasm itself. Instead, they were content to enjoy the experience of the amphitheatre below. As the others lingered there, Steve started to make his way back down the gorge alone. At some point during his descent he lost his footing on the rocky ledges and fell. When his companions found him at the base of the waterfall he was still conscious but clearly suffering serious injuries. While some of the group stayed to comfort him, others walked back to camp to get help. A

rescue team was on its way when Steve died later that evening.

When I first heard news of this accident I was with family and friends at a farmhouse in the southern Flinders Ranges. Even though Bunyip Chasm was some 400 kilometres away it suddenly felt very close. At the time

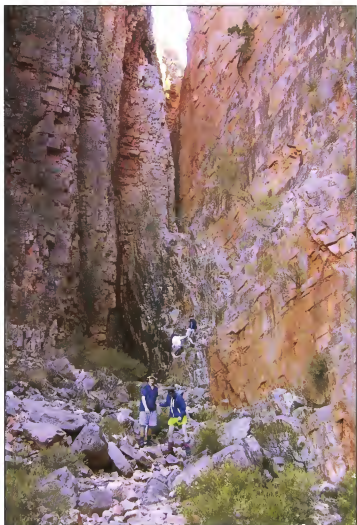
who was involved. Part of me realised that in the Gammons and elsewhere I had often been in situations where a slip or a lapse in concentration could have resulted in serious injury or worse. But there was a knot of darker, more dishonourable thoughts too. Part of me felt indignant that this had

happened in a location I held dear. I found myself questioning the credentials of whoever was involved and selfishly wondering how such a tragedy and the attendant public exposure might breach the aura of sanctuary that walkers tend to impose on such places.

By the time we'd returned home two days later I had pushed speculation about the news story from my mind. However, that night I had a phone call from Sue Giles, an old friend of my brother, Jonathan, who told of her week away in the Gammons and the terrible news that Steve Hood—another of Jonathan's close friends—had died as a result of an accident. She explained how she and Steve's wife Mary had remained at their camp while the others walked to Bunyip Chasm. And Sue briefly described Mary's ordeal as she waited for news, the efforts of the rescue services and the strength of this group of close friends as they supported each other in the struggle to come to terms with what had happened. Sue's phone call turned what had been an 'anonymous' accident into something very different.

I first came to know Steve Hood in the early 1970s when he was one of a circle of my brother's friends at Flinders University. As a group they enjoyed a lot of experiences, especially through their common interest in scuba diving and the outdoors. This shared life made a lasting impression on me. Looking on as a solitary, often gloomy teenager it seemed like a window on a bright, tempting world of friendship, ideas and adventure.

Steve was an inescapable presence in this group. He was doubly imposing: a big bear of a man who also possessed an exceptional mind. Although principally a scientist—he had a doctorate in Physics—his interests spanned many fields from food and wine to music



Bunyip Chasm is the most celebrated of the Gammon Ranges's ravines. Flinders Camping

there was no word of who was involved. But having spent time in the Gammons and at the scene of the accident, the sparse facts of the news story shook me into a recollection of place. The details of the scene—the bulk and steepness of the rock steps, the encircling corral of sandstone cliffs and the trees silhouetted high on the ridges—all surfaced vividly in my mind.

With these images came an instinctive curiosity to know what had happened and

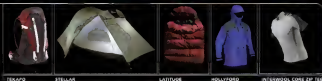
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and the environment. Steve took knowledge seriously and he often had the air of someone who felt duty-bound to share what he knew. While his presiding intelligence and sceptical eye could make him appear gruff he was fundamentally a generous, caring spirit with a ready laugh. He valued his friendships but like a lot of truly bright people there were moments in gatherings when he seemed unsure how to respond.

Much of his professional life was spent with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation based at Salisbury, north of Adelaide. His career included significant defence science postings to Washington DC. When I asked him once what he was working on he laughed and said: 'If I told you then I'd have to kill you.'

For all his academic reach Steve never lost his fascination with the elemental world of nature. He loved the ocean and the bush. That a man of such competence should have come unstuck seems to be a reminder that even the most dependable among us are subject to the same heavy blows of fate that knock on our lives. Having come to this simple truth, my initial knee-jerk response to news of the accident felt even more ignoble.

We live in a time when accidents are rarely allowed to remain accidents. There have to be inquiries, fault has to be found and lessons learned. Our society has created a cult of blame. The fear of liability and litigation infects even the most innocuous activities. In the wake of Steve's death there were a few follow-up press reports but fortunately media response was relatively subdued.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the National Parks Service decided to take a closer look at the scene of the accident. As a result of this investigation it was decided to 'close' Bunyip Chasm. A sign was erected advising walkers of the closure. Public safety and liability were not the only issues at stake. There were also the concerns of the local Adnyamathanha people, many of whom work within the park. For them the chasm they know as Winmiindanha is traditionally part of an area that is sacred and out of bounds.

The real import of this closure is hard to assess. Doubtless many bushwalkers would question the need for such a restriction, given that scores of people have safely visited the chasm. The other inescapable fact is that there are hundreds of other rock scrambles scattered throughout the Gam-

mons that are at least as dangerous as those in Bunyip Chasm. And given the impossibility of monitoring walkers in this terrain you begin to realise that the significance of the Parks Service's decision is perhaps more symbolic than practical.

Any accident in the bush should give all who travel through remote, difficult country pause for thought. No matter how much we strive to be self-reliant there are incidents where others are, of necessity, drawn into the fray. A death creates even more serious ripples in so many lives. Out of regard for others we need to take care and step wisely. However, at the same time there is a responsibility to guard the essence of wild places

and our right to experience them. We owe that much at least to the memory of those who have lost their lives pursuing their passion for the bush.

A few months after Steve Hood's death I noticed a news item in a Sydney paper. It told of Klara Clausen, a Sydney teenager, who died on a school camp near Mittagong when a 10 metre tree fell on her tent during an electrical storm. At her funeral her father urged the school to press on with their camps. 'The value of the bonding experience and the opportunity to experience nature firsthand should be grasped. And you should not be intimidated by the small prospect of a freak accident,' he said.

As much as the specific 'closure' of Bunyip Chasm might be questioned, it perhaps matters less than our society's wider eagerness for recrimination, where victims are judged and places blamed. A fear of the wild that further distances people from

the natural world is every bit as empty as the pristine ideal that resurfaced when I first heard news of an accident in 'my' precious Gammon Ranges.

The fact is that sites like Bunyip Chasm have never been wilderness in the abstract way that we sometimes like to imagine. They might have a certain magic but they have always been places of life and death. That is true for the Adnyamathanha. It is also now true for many others.

At Steve Hood's funeral his wife Mary spoke of the man she loved: 'I will hold on to the fact that Steve died embracing life, excited and enthralled by the natural beauty around him and fulfilling one of his dreams.'

Quentin Chester

Quentin Chester

has been a contributor since *Wild* no 3; he lives to walk and writes to live. His much preferred habitat is a deep Flinders Ranges gorge where he can be found resting on sandstone close to cool, dark waterholes and abundant food sources. qchester@senet.com.au



Wilderness [RE]

Michele Kohout and her dad rediscover the Victorian Alps, Wilsons Promontory, and the

MY MANY TRIPS TO WILSONS PROMONTORY had finally made Dad curious—he hadn't been there since a walking trip in the early 1950s. We packed our walking gear and headed to Tidal River to begin the Sealers Cove–Refuge Cove–Waterloo Bay circuit. It wasn't just a walking trip; it was an adventure with my Dad, rediscovering our friendship, sharing our ideas and experiences.

Although I'd grown up camping and spending time in the outdoors, it had been many years since I had been anywhere with Dad. The inevitable embarrassment of being anywhere with my parents had set in during teenage years and, although I appreciated nature, it wasn't until university that I had developed an almost obsessive love of the bush. Over the last few years this passion became a need—since friends often didn't have the time for trips I began walking and camping solo. I craved the solitude, and as Quentin Chester comments (*Wild no 76*) the simplicity of decision making and changing suited me. Most of my father's trips had also been alone and it was inevitable that, almost subconsciously, I had followed suit. As a solo female walker I had been amused by the reactions of people I encountered, but was never deterred.

We set off from Telegraph Saddle towards my beloved Sealers Cove. Dad found it strange walking on a former track at first as he usually roams in the Victorian High Country, navigating by

compass. His home-made walking-stick and old aluminium-framed pack soon set his rhythm. We reached Sealers Cove almost too soon after stopping to look for native fish in Blackfish Creek. Dad had a snooze on the beach while I said hello to my favourite tree, a messmate, which has limbs that reach out towards the water near the camping ground. We talked about the early days of the cove as we looked at the remains of the jetty. It had once been 180 metres long but now the stumps were almost obliterated by sand. Sealers, whalers and timber cutters had eked out an existence here from 1843. I wondered how many old houses in Melbourne had wood that originated from the surrounding hills. Nature has reclaimed its land and there is now little evidence of this past plundering.

During the next day's walk to Refuge Cove Dad told me about his first visit to Wilsons Promontory. In the early 1950s a friend and he had walked to the light-house and stayed in the schoolhouse, used by the children of the two families living there at the time. The next day they had walked out to Sealers Cove. He recounted an incident that had happened that day, laughing as he talked. Early in the morning he had encountered a snake and, having a billy-bandy, had coerced the sleepy reptile into it so that he could show it to his companion. He then promptly forgot about it. The billy was unpacked at Sealers Cove when his

Vladimir Kohout, the author's father, surveys his beloved High Country from Dimmick Lookout. All uncredited photos by the author

GENERATION

walking friendship



mate went to get water—the irritated and well-travelled snake would have given his friend a fright!

Refuge Cove made a good lunch spot before we continued up to Kersops Peak for a rewarding view of the ocean through the grass-trees. We pitched our tents at Little Waterloo Bay and shared some tea before looking in the creek for eels. That night, inspired by the rolling waves and ‘shooshing’ of the sand, we had fantastic, vivid dreams. The next morning we lingered by Waterloo Bay examining the flotsam and jetsam deposited by the tide—a large stick insect, an ornate cowfish, even a stranded elephant fish. It was with regret that we eventually turned inland and made our way back to Telegraph Saddle.

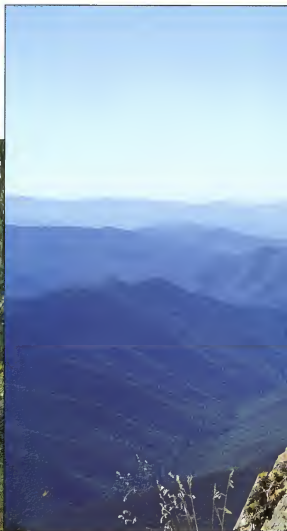
drive, full of anticipation. My father was heading to familiar territory, having spent years exploring the rugged off-track terrain in the Wonnangatta River/Conglomerate Creek area, and was keen to show me his favourite haunts. Although I had done some fieldwork in the area I hadn’t explored the rocky ridges properly or wandered at leisure amongst the snow gums.

We left Dimmick Lookout and headed briskly down the track towards Mt Darling Saddle. Since our trip to Wilsons Promontory I had become an even keener walker, steadily buying myself gear. I smiled as I compared our walking attire: my father still walked in thick, woollen army pants, home-made canvas gaiters, a

over the flames at my food and raised his eyebrows at my dried fish, couscous, dehydrated bok choy and Chinese mushrooms. He carried precooked potatoes and schnitzels, portioned in foil for each meal. I reminded him of the weight but he was adamant that it was the sustenance he had to have. We were like children with Christmas



The author enjoys a bit of tree-hugging with a large mountain gum on the way to Mt Darling. Vladimir Kohout. Right, the generation gap, bushwalking-style: Michele and Vladimir Kohout look east from a ridge on the way up Mt Darling.



“ I smiled as I compared our walking attire: my father still walked in thick, woollen army pants, home-made canvas gaiters, a long-sleeved flannelette shirt, a multipocketed vest made by Mother and an ancient aluminium-frame rucksack.”

Although it had passed far too quickly, it had been extremely satisfying to share my special place with Dad. We looked forward to telling our stories to Mum at home. As we headed back to Melbourne, Dad suddenly said: ‘You should come with me to Mt Darling sometime.’ The seed was sown: three years later we headed toward the Victorian Alps in Dad’s ancient four-wheel

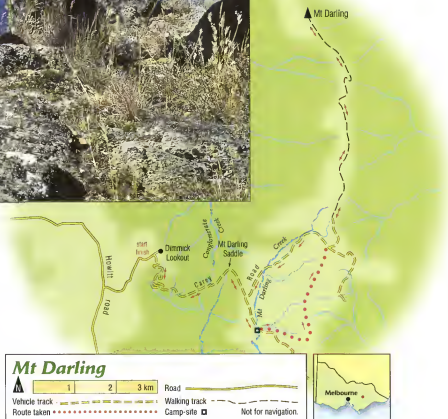
long-sleeved flannelette shirt, a multipocketed vest made by Mother and an ancient aluminium-frame rucksack. I was wearing cotton pants, gaiters, a short-sleeved top, a newish pack designed for females and was walking gingerly in new walking boots, also specially designed for the female foot.

The comparisons continued once we set up camp and sat around the fire. Dad peered

The walk to the summit of Mt. Darling ended up taking five hours, but the views along the way were perfect distractions. At every gap in the trees Dad would point out a steep ridge or thickly vegetated gully and say, 'I walked up there many times'. I would shake my head and imagine all that he had seen. He talked of navigating purely by compass on many occasions when the thick fog had blanketed familiar landmarks. I was glad to have inherited his almost uncanny sense of direction and rather proudly pointed out various rocky outcrops I recognised from our walk the previous day.

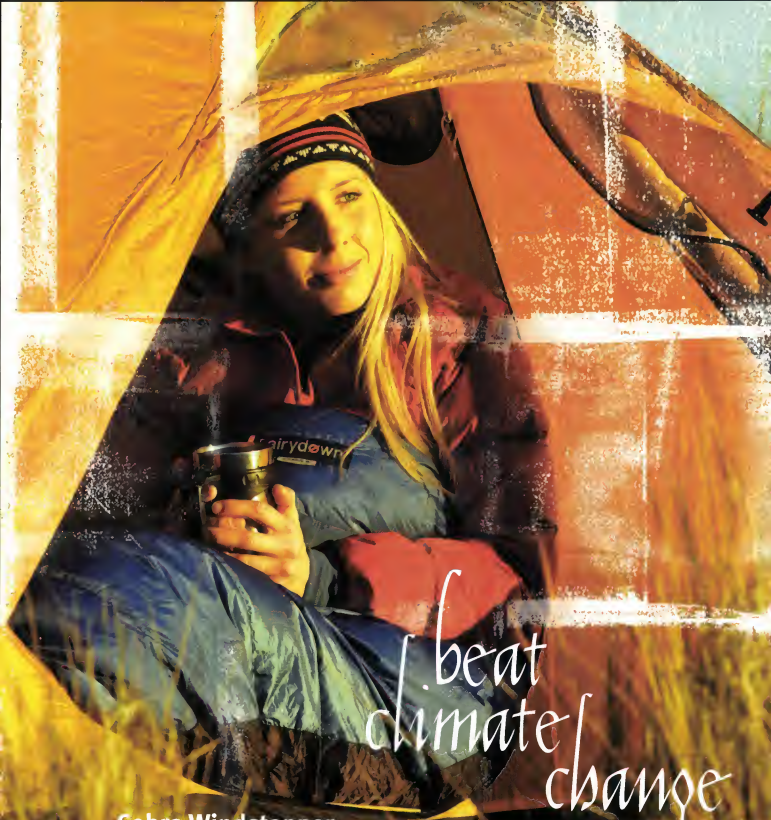


After battling along the overgrown, disused track we finally emerged in alpine grassland where the yellow daisies were just beginning to unfurl their petals for the day ahead. 'It's about two and a half hours to the summit', Dad commented. I unwittingly



the variety of ingeniously designed alpine-plant seeds. I've always been someone who looks at the smaller details, as well as the views that stretch to the far horizon, and had been walking behind Dad exclaiming at fuzzy caterpillars, orchids and owl pellets that he had missed. On the other hand, Dad would point out the incredible patterns in

After traversing the undulating ridgeline we were both relieved to reach the small cairn marking the summit of Mt Darling. Mt Buffalo sat brooding on the horizon and we pointed out peaks to each other, debating some, agreeing on others. We marvelled at the vast expanse of pleated, folded mountain ranges. The day's highlight was a wedge-

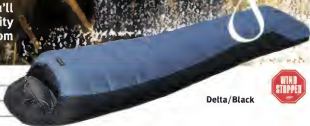


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tailed eagle that soared slowly a few metres above the treetops, close enough for us to see feathers being ruffled by currents of air. Stories of dingoes, wombats and possums flowed from Dad as we ate lunch and relaxed in satisfaction.

Years ago I would not have been as interested in listening to Dad's adventures in the bush. I realised that over the years I had begun to appreciate his outdoors expertise and knowledge, this trip providing the perfect setting to rediscover our friendship. I had

we said. My father already seemed to be planning future trips and the names Mt Kent and Mt Wills were mentioned tantalisingly. We shared our last apple and muesli bar, drank our last water and began the hurried descent to camp as the light faded.

Our camp by Mt Darling Creek was an old logging base and at first the discarded pipes, drums and bottles had disconcerted

moments. But that morning we both lay in our tents and enjoyed the bird chorus in a snoozy, drowsy, tired haze. Being in a small tent somehow amplified and focused each song—on emerging we looked around for the honey-eaters, gang-gangs, willy wagtails and lyre-birds we had heard.

We procrastinated while packing up, slowly gathering possessions. 'Well, how many blisters

He stopped to show me a wonderful vista, before quietly telling me that I had better note the location as this was where his ashes would be scattered.

my own walking stories to tell and Dad appeared surprised that I had managed to explore so many places. He occasionally nodded his quiet approval as I shouldered my weighty pack, had a pocket knife at the ready or found what scarce water there was in grass-obscured creeks. Dad is a man of few words and rare moments of praise, so a nod was more than enough for me.

On our way back to camp we lingered at an old helipad, the afternoon light complementing the spectacular views towards Snowy Bluff, and I realised that I couldn't see a single human construction. We rested on the soft grass and wished that we were camping there. The sunrise would be spectacular but the lack of water was a major obstacle. Another difference in our walking philosophy became evident: Dad prefers to camp in a valley near water, never mind the view, while I prefer to see the first and last rays of light and to this end will happily carry extra water and plan to cook meals that require little water. We eventually agreed that this particular place would make a good camp-site, worth the extra weight of water. 'One day, maybe in spring',

Michele Kohout

is an ecologist, illustrator and co-author of *A Field Guide to Wilsons Promontory*. She is at her happiest when armed with her tent, and old SLR camera, surrounded by the extravagance and beauty of nature.



Like father like daughter: Michele and her dad at Kersops Peak, Wilsons Promontory. Vladimir Kohout

and upset me. In the light of dusk they took on another dimension and I thought about the men who had toiled to remove trees here years ago. The old kerosene-powered fridge lying on its side was now the home of skinks and a myriad of insects, grass was growing over old bricks and the forest was slowly but surely reclaiming its land. Many old gums had been left standing, including the ones towering above our tents. 'Imagine what they have seen', mused Dad. 'Every day they stand and look over this patch of land.' I thought about the different weather conditions

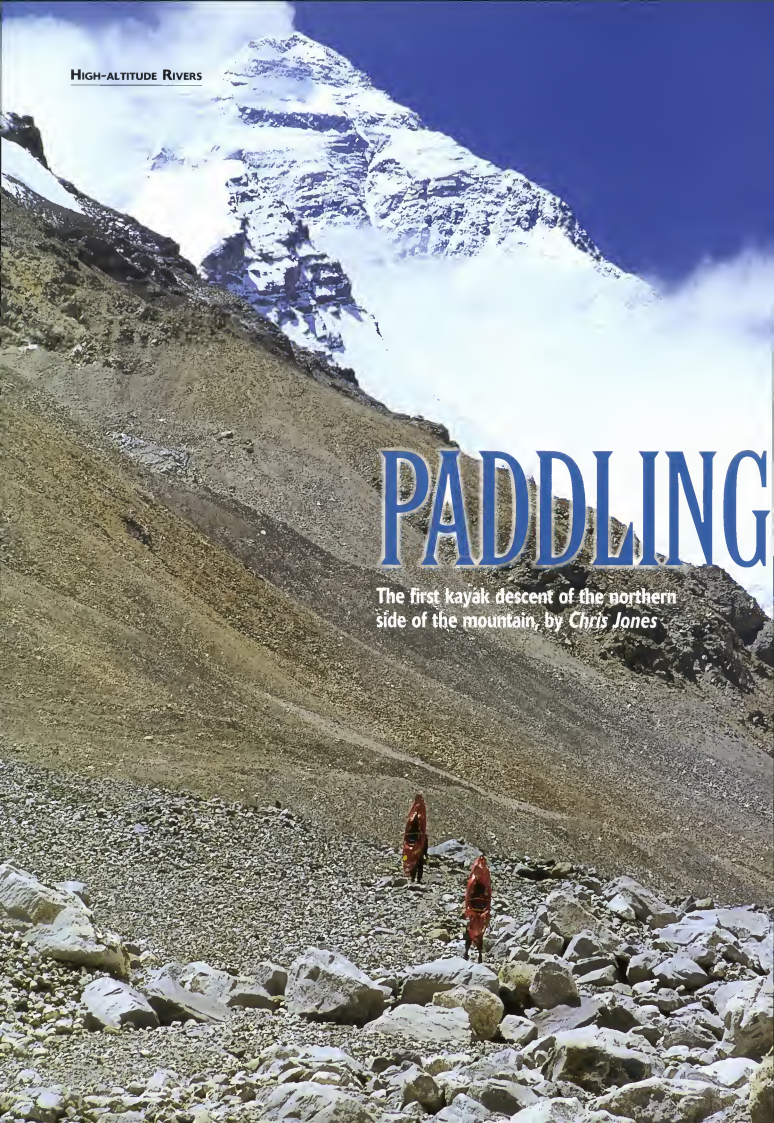
they had endured: snow, violent storms, lashing rain, baking sun, and still they stood.

I rarely sleep late when camping and am always eager to see the sun rise—usually at I've gone to bed at 9 pm on a solo jaunt and had too much sleep! I could never understand how fellow walkers could slumber on past dawn, missing some of the most magic

did you end up with?' was the obligatory question from someone who had suffered from ill-fitting boots almost as much as I. 'Would you believe, none', I replied incredulously as the fact dawned on me. He smiled and muttered, almost more to himself: 'Finally you've got yourself some proper gear.'

As we slowly retraced our steps to the car I thought about the last few days. It had been years since I had spent so much time with my father. I would miss our fireside chats and natural-history discussions. We had each noticed different things during the walk, enhancing our experiences. I had learned a lot from Dad, respected his love of wilderness and admired his endurance. He stopped to show me a wonderful vista, before quietly telling me that I had better note the location as this was where his ashes would be scattered. However, it wasn't a sad moment at all; I know he will spend many more years exploring this area.

We've done a few more trips together, meeting up on the weekends after Dad has spent the week revisiting ferny gullies and groves of old snow gums. My father is 76 years old; if I can still go walking as energetically at this age I'll be grateful. ☀



HIGH-ALTITUDE RIVERS

PADDLING

The first kayak descent of the northern side of the mountain, by *Chris Jones*

RONGBUK MONASTERY TIBET 11 PM: I LIE snuggled in my sleeping-bag listening to the prayer flags flapping furiously outside the tent. Tomorrow we go up. My mind ticks over every item of gear carefully chosen for our Mt Everest climb. I wonder whether Mallory and Irving camped in the same spot as we? Did they lie awake questioning the next day's outcome? For our small team, the next day will be different from that of any other expedition that has camped at the Rongbuk Monastery. In our packs we have paddling gear instead of climbing equipment: instead of ropes, crampons and ice axes we have plastic kayaks, paddles and spray-decks!

The idea of paddling the northern river of Mt Everest had been in the back of my mind for a number of years. The river that drains the Khumbu Ice-fall on the Nepali side, the Dudh Kosi, was kayaked by an international team and filmed for the documentary *The Relentless River of Everest*, and has received a lot of attention since. Why had no one ever paddled the river



MT EVEREST

that must drain the north side of the mountain? All that snow and ice had to melt and flow somewhere—imagine launching your kayak off the end of the Rongbuk Glacier and paddling all the way to Nepal! Mt Everest seems to attract crazy stunts so I was surprised that as far as I could determine, no one had ever attempted to kayak the Rong Chu (the Tibetan name of the river). Years ago a couple of crazy Russians had paddled home-made rafts from high on the Rongbuk Glacier: if it could be done in home-made rafts, it could definitely be kayaked!

Our paddling team consisted of Justin Boocock (Australian Olympic canoeist), Georgia LePlastrier (a talented expedition kayaker from Melbourne), my partner, Sharyn Smith, who planned to document our descent with camera and video, and me. We had just completed a challenging kayak expedition in east Tibet so we were fit,

strong and well acclimatised. We left Lhasa in a downpour that quickly turned to snow as we wound our way over the first 5000 metre pass on the three-day drive to Everest Base Camp. These days the road goes all the way. The last seven kilometres above

■ All that snow and ice had to melt and flow somewhere—imagine launching your kayak off the end of the Rongbuk Glacier and paddling all the way to Nepal! ■

the Rongbuk Monastery are open only to horse-drawn carts, allowing the local horsemen to make a living and keeping tour-group vehicles out of Base Camp.

We spent a day preparing our gear and acclimatising at the monastery. Our plan was to walk as high as possible above Base Camp and look for the source of the Rong

Chu, the point where the Rongbuk Glacier becomes a river. We planned to go lightweight—no porters, no Sherpas—and had cut our gear down to an absolute minimum: enough food for one day and a tiny first aid kit. We weren't taking spare clothes—we were

going to walk in our paddling gear with our dry suits over the top and our kayaks strapped to our rucksacks, leaving as little as possible for Sharyn to bring back down with the horse. We decided against taking a heavy spare paddle; what were the chances of breaking a paddle?

We were up at dawn, prepared for the chaos of packing our boats into the horse carts that we had negotiated the night before. Nothing is simple in Tibet: the process turned into a comical circus of misunderstanding, wild gestures, and humorous but frustrating games of charades. Finally the carts were loaded and Sharyn had found herself a horse and convinced the owner that a Western girl could be trusted to ride it safely and return it at the end of the day. The owner followed along behind our little caravan just in case.

Although we were in the middle of the monsoon the weather was in our favour: Mt Everest loomed bright and clear at the

Left, Chris Jones and Justin Boocock look like colourful beetles as they stumble over the scree slopes, dwarfed by Mt Everest. Above, the author holds on to his precious gear as the pony-cart procession winds its way to Everest Base Camp. Both photos Sharyn Smith

head of the valley. We could clearly make out all the famous features—the North-east Ridge, the North Col and the Great Couloir. It was hard to drag our eyes away from the view towards the river, roaring through the rocky chaos of the valley floor. It was fortunate that we could rarely see the river as the steep gradient and dangerous white

metres at a time, looking for rocks on which to balance our boats while we caught our breath. Disaster almost overtook us at one rest stop. Justin tried to stand but lost his balance and fell over backwards, landing heavily on the paddle strapped to the outside of his boat. He untangled himself from his pack and sheepishly turned over the boat although we both knew what we'd find: his brand-new paddle was snapped cleanly in half. Deeply regretting our de-

cision to leave the spare paddle behind, we hopped around cursing and swearing at our bad luck.

We couldn't turn back now so made an emergency repair with an aluminium rucksack support and duct tape—not ideal for running grade-5 white water at an elevation of 5000 metres but it was all we had! We continued to walk up to the confluence of the East Rong Chu and the Rong Chu, the main drainage from the Rongbuk Glacier.



*Like paddling in a milk shake:
Georgia LePlastrier paddling grade-4
white water just below Everest Base
Camp. The silty, glacial water was
incredibly difficult to read.*

water might otherwise have halted our plans!

We reached Everest Base Camp—on the Tibetan side this consists of a small settlement of teashops and stone guest-houses as there were no climbing expeditions in town. Georgia was really suffering from the altitude and decided to wait for us here. We paid and thanked our horse drivers and staggered out of Base Camp with our kayaks firmly strapped to our backs, the entire population coming out to watch us. The local Tibetans must be used to seeing crazy Westerners but by the looks on their faces, we must have been the weirdest white people they had ever seen!

The track from Base Camp to Advance Base Camp is rough and rocky and Sharyn quickly realised that it wasn't possible to ride her horse. The poor old fella just didn't have the energy; Justin and I knew how he felt! We staggered along for about 500

ADVENTURES OF A TIBETAN

Chris Jones's job is far from normal



*The trainee guides navigate rapids on the Kongpo Chu.
All uncredited photos by the author*

Shangri-La; the land of snows; the roof of the world; a high-altitude desert: from most descriptions of Tibet it is hard to believe that it has a large number of spectacular rivers. Mt Kailash in the west of Tibet is the source of the subcontinent's four greatest rivers: the Ganges, Indus, Sutlej and Brahmaputra. In the east in the forested land of Kham is the source of the Mekong and the Yangtze, the two largest rivers in east Asia. In the summer months regular rain swells Tibet's rivers, resulting in a surprising number of world-class rafting and kayaking rivers.

Tibetans have used rivers for transport for hundreds of years. Yak-skin coracles regularly

ferried passengers and goods across the Yarlung Tsangpo and the Lhasa River. Modern river-running in Tibet began in the early 1980s when intrepid kayakers and rafters started to explore. However, due to travel restrictions and challenging logistics, there has been very little river exploration to date. Boating in Tibet used to be the domain of big-budget expeditions or clandestine, dirt-bag missions but the country has begun to open up. New roads and modern vehicles have made rivers more accessible and river permits are easier to procure. There is an amazing number of world-class rivers just waiting to be explored.

Just above us were the ice pinnacles of Advance Base Camp.

The East Rong Chu was unrunnable and disappeared down a huge sink-hole so we dragged our boats down loose scree to the ice at the tongue of the glacier. The river didn't pour out from under the glacier as we had expected, but pooled on top of the glacier to form a huge, dirty lake. Paddling on this was quite intimidating as seracs and boulders regularly fell into the lake. It was 5 pm,

RIVER GUIDE

In the summer of 2003 I had the opportunity to help a Tibetan adventure-travel company establish the first Tibet-based river guiding outfit. On 1 July I flew into Lhasa, bringing 80 kilograms of boating gear. I didn't know what to expect. My first task was to begin training Tibet's first river guides. I had four trainees—ranging to go but with limited river skills (and questionable swimming ability!) The first few days were fairly amusing but luckily the boys learned quickly. Three experienced Nepali guides drove up from Kathmandu and we quickly formed a multicultural team communicating in English, Nepali and feeble attempts at Tibetan. We conducted much of our introductory training in a pool in Lhasa surrounded by groups of Tibetan and Chinese kids. We taught the Tibetans the fundamentals of rafting and kayaking before moving on to more challenging white water.

Over the next six weeks we paddled eight different rivers and creeks—some were first descents while others had been paddled once or twice before. There is an amazingly diverse selection of rivers within a day's drive of Lhasa. The Kyi Chu (Lhasa River) runs right through the city and has many miles of scenic, easy white water. An hour outside Lhasa is the Tolung Chu. This glacial-fed river begins as a high-altitude stream near amazing hot springs and plunges through a tight gorge before easing to friendly grade-2-3 water. My favourite river is north-east of Lhasa in the stunning Drigung Valley. We found 60 kilometres of crystal-clear, high-altitude river: the upper sections have grade-5 creeking but there are two days of wonderfully continuous grade-3 and -4 in the lower section. Nomads and yaks watched us at the put-in and villagers circled a traditional sky-burial site high above the river to the north. A visit to the nearby Tserdrom Nunnery and the sublime hot springs is a must.

Further east of Lhasa we had a three-day trip on the Kongpo Chu. Again, this starts as a high-altitude alp-

ine stream but builds in volume, becoming a superb grade-3-4 run.

We were having quite a wet season: in Lhasa it rained every single day of July. We had been waiting for the rain to stop so that we could paddle the Yarlung Tsangpo. Everything we had heard about this river made it sound like the hardest run in the world, but our maps and old expedition reports indicated that we could find some runnable sections. Towards the end of August we finally gave up waiting for the high waters to go down and decided to go and see for ourselves.

Where the Kyi Chu meets the Yarlung the river looks like the Mississippi; flat, muddy and very wide. However, as you drive towards Shigatse the nature of the river changes. The river banks close in and a huge gorge forms near the town of Nyemo. No superlatives can really capture the size and power of these rapids. We drove out of the gorge with the boats firmly strapped to the roof—perhaps the next season the water would be lower!

We headed towards Shigatse and found somewhat tamer water. The Yarlung here was still a powerful monster of a river: the huge waves dwarfed our kayaks and made our four metre raft look like a bath-tub toy. The river was moving so fast that it took us around three hours to paddle just less than 50 kilometres!

September came around far too quickly. My two months in Tibet had been my most unique paddling adventure by far. On our final night in Lhasa the Tibetan trainees took us out on the town to celebrate their success and my departure. We had already run ten commercial trips and two of the guys could now roll and paddle grade-3 water. I flew out of Lhasa the next morning with a hazy head. My flight took me out over the wild, forested regions of eastern Tibet. Even from 9000 metres I could see multitudes of rivers cascading through the forests, just waiting to be explored and paddled. 🏞️

Tibetan kids gather to check out the crazy foreigners at the take-out point for the Medro Chu.



much later than we had planned, and the melt was at its highest. There was quite a strong flow and we were soon paddling short rapids through dirty, grey ice and huge boulders. We were very nervous that the river might flow under the ice again so paddled very conservatively, carefully scouting at each rapid.

At the end of the Rongbuk Glacier the Rong Chu drops off the terminal moraine through a number of very steep, grade-5+ rapids so we were forced to portage. The water was incredibly cold and I was thankful for my dry suit. Georgia and a crowd of amazed Tibetans were waiting for us at Base Camp: we were totally exhausted but still had seven kilometres to paddle back to our camp at Rongbuk Monastery.

From Base Camp to the monastery the river begins as fast-flowing grade-two. The Tibetan teashop owners chased us down the first few rapids smiling, pointing and laughing before they ran out of breath. There is another, older terminal moraine just below Base Camp and the river drops at an incredible gradient. We ran the first few rapids but then things got a bit out of hand. The glacial water drops through crazy boulderfields with high potential to get pinned and difficult grade-5 moves. It was very continuous, with few eddies. We were exhausted; there was no way we could paddle that water with any kind of safety margin so we portaged a number of long grade-5 rapids.

We tried paddling down the side but it was like riding a bob-sled down a scree slope and a number of near broaches and pins forced us from our boats. After a further kilometre we decided that it was easier to paddle than portage and got back in our boats again. I had never paddled such continuous water before. It was a three kilometre long, grade-5 rapid, followed by grade-4+ water. We got into the main flow, pointed our boats straight and paddled as hard as we could! There was little possibility of edging out. We arrived back at Rongbuk Monastery completely done in.

The next day the entire community of monks and guest-house staff watched from the banks as we paddled away—what a send off! The 20 kilometres below the monastery turned out to be wonderful, continuous grade-4 water with great views of Mt Everest

behind us. The rapids eased after lunch but due to the gradient we were still covering about 11 kilometres an hour. We paddled 60 kilometres that day and camped in a barren, windy camp-site.

The next day we paddled braided but fast-flowing water into the next gorge. It

Mt Everest. Below Kharta the high-altitude desert landscape soon turns to thick jungle and the entrance to the Upper Arun gorges; it is incredible how quickly this happens. Knowing that the Nepali border was not far downstream, and that the Arun gorges hold some of the most formidable canyons and



A huge lenticular cloud indicates high winds on Mt Everest as the team paddle back to the camp-site at Rongbuk Monastery. Smith

had weird desert formations and 6000 metre peaks in the background; it was spectacular. We had timed it perfectly as the water-level had risen overnight and the river now had a flooded feel. It was no harder than grade-4 and we flew past small oases of lush trees and villages amid the arid landscape. There was a nasty head wind and few options for camp-sites so we put our heads down and paddled another 60 kilometres, all the way to the village of Kharta on the east side of

unrunnable white water, it was a very satisfying place to finish the trip.

We camped near the river and were invaded by about 30 kids from the local village keen to check out the crazy foreigners and their plastic boats. The next morning we piled back into our four-wheel drives and began

Fact file

Travel to Tibet


With the 2008 Olympics in Beijing approaching, the Chinese Government is attempting to open Tibet to foreign tourism. However, many restrictions are still in place. To travel in Tibet you are officially required to join a group tour, which can be done through a number of agents in Australia. It is now also possible to travel independently in Tibet. To enter Tibet as an independent traveller the easiest way is to travel to Chengdu in China and find a local travel agent who can arrange your entry permit and flight. You will have to join a 'group' to travel to Lhasa but once in Lhasa you are free to travel independently. It is difficult to travel on local transport and many independent travellers end up joining forces and renting a four-wheel drive. There are rumours that the permit system may be abolished soon.

Trekking, climbing and kayaking in Tibet

Much of Tibet is still relatively unexplored and first ascents and descents await the adventurous climber and kayaker. To undertake any of these more adventurous activities you really have to travel as a group and have a local agent arrange permits and transport for you. There are a small number of travel agents who specialise in adventure activities in Tibet.

When to go

It is possible to travel to Tibet at any time of year. The summer months of May–September are the most popular as temperatures are comparatively mild. This is the best time for mountaineering and high-altitude treks. The winter months from November to March are often cold and clear and it can be a very rewarding time to visit as there are hardly any foreigners. It is also the customary time for Tibetan pilgrims to visit major Buddhist sites.

the long journey home. As we bumped and rattled our way up to the last pass with a view of Mt Everest we looked into the huge valley we had paddled down. Mt Everest was fully covered by monsoon cloud once again and we could hardly distinguish the river snaking down the valley. It was hard to believe that in three days we had completed a partial circumnavigation of Mt Everest by river. We had probably set an altitude record for white-water kayaking (5250 metres) and, most importantly, we'd had one of the most satisfying kayaking trips we had ever done, with a group of good friends. 

Chris Jones

is a Tasmanian kayaker who in 2001 drank too much rum punch on a river bank in Nepal and somehow ended up with a job in Tibet! He now spends each summer living in Lhasa, training local Tibetan river guides and managing the first white-water guiding operation in Tibet. He would like to thank everyone who made his crazy dream a reality.

Territorial creatures

Scales, feathers and antennae, by Gavin Foreman



*Blue-winged kookaburra posing for a portrait.
All photos were taken in the Northern Territory.*



A prickly customer: the thorny devil searches for its next meal of black ants.



Govin Foreman is a keen photographer, bushwalker and amateur film maker who has worked as a tour guide in the Northern Territory, Central Australia, Kakadu and the Kimberley for the last ten years. He also enjoys travelling and is driving overland trucks in east Africa at present.

*The colourful Leichardt's grasshopper feeds on a pityrodia bush. **Below**, a frill-necked lizard displays its scaly defences.*



The Life and Walks of Myles Dunphy

Peter Meredith profiles a towering figure from the early bushwalking and conservation movements



THE DESCENT INTO THE VALLEY SHOULD have been easy for the two bushwalkers. They were both in their early 20s, fit and sinewy as young brumbies and following a well-defined track that had been in regular use for nearly 30 years. Although the descent was about 400 metres, the gradient was nothing to grumble about. However, their burden was: each man was carrying around 27 kilograms and not in a purpose-built 21st-century rucksack. Instead, their improvised two-piece arrangement consisted of a swag hanging down the spine and a canvas bag (known as a gunny bag) on the chest, linked by a leather strap that ran over the left shoulder. In their hands the young men carried any items that didn't fit in the swags or gunnies, including billies, mugs and a rifle each.

The date was 5 October 1912. Sydney architecture student Myles Dunphy and art student Bert Gallop were at Nellies Glen. This is the start of the Six Foot Track in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, where the track begins to drop towards the Megalong Valley below the town of Katoomba. Although the men already had several extended walks under their belts, this would be the longest they had attempted by far.

In light of this, Dunphy's punctilious nature wouldn't let him skimp on gear and food, despite the weight. Among items he considered essential were a compass, a map, sleeping-bags of 'American cloth lined with blanket', cooking utensils and an acetylene lamp with nearly two kilograms of fuel. He almost decided to leave the custom-made two-person calico tent behind and later was glad he hadn't. It didn't have poles, but was supported by a rope run through slits and fixed to trees, bushes or sticks. Food included German sausage, pork fritz, bacon, dripping, butter, tea, sugar, jam, condensed milk, flour, oats, bread, onions, potatoes, shallots and cream crackers. This would be supplemented with fresh meat, mainly rabbit, shot with the rifles for which they carried 700 rounds of ammunition between them. Other items included a harmonica, a piccolo, sketch-books, crayons and pencils, 'two vols literature', fish-hooks and lines, a medical kit, hatchets and '1 tin Cobra boot polish'.

Not surprisingly, the men found the trudge down Nellies Glen 'a bit of a corker', as Dunphy later described it in one of the 73 journals he compiled during his lifetime. 'Before we got far from [the foot of] [the] Glen our shoulders were aching and the calves of our legs quaking'.

Once down in the valley, Dunphy and Gallop were able to press on at a steady pace, especially after Dunphy adjusted his swag so that it was horizontal across his back instead of vertical down the

Top, Myles Dunphy in his later years. Left, Dunphy using his 'Dungal' system of carrying gear in 1915. Food went in the gunny bag on his chest, other gear in the swag on his back. All photos the Colong Foundation for Wilderness



middle. This was the forerunner of what he would eventually call the Dun-gal, or Dungal, system of carrying gear. He found it easier on the spine than other methods and obstinately stuck to it long after other bushwalkers had sensibly converted to rucksacks.

Dunphy had drawn up an ambitious itinerary: he and Gallop would cross the Blue Mountains, travelling by way of Jenolan—site of world-renowned limestone caves and a popular tourist destination since the mid-1800s—and then penetrate eastwards through uncharted territory to the Burratorang Valley (this is now flooded and a source of Sydney's drinking-water). From the Burratorang Valley they would walk south to Mittagong, the southern highlands, and then to the coast at Kiama, where Dunphy had once lived. He calculated the total distance to be around 300 kilometres.

It took the pair three days to reach Jenolan though a fast and lightly loaded walker could cover the 45 kilometres in a day. Beyond Jenolan Dunphy's plan began to fall apart. At a seemingly impassable gorge named Hells Gate, on the Jenolan River, the pair climbed a nearby slope to get a view ahead. Dunphy's heart sank. 'We could now see the lines of cliffs marking the course of the river for over a mile and a deadly aspect it presented', he wrote. 'We wound around another ridge and started a third. The cliffs still continued and the outlook [was] hopeless.'

The pair retreated. However, they were determined to continue their journey despite the set-back so walked by road back to Katoomba, continued eastwards past the town and then southward to the Burratorang Valley by way of a spur known as Kings Tableland. Enchanted by the secluded vale's blend of natural beauty and pastoral serenity, the pair 'mooched' (a favourite word of Dunphy's) through it until, 21 days and 230 kilometres after setting out, they ended their journey at the town of Pictou. From there they caught a train back to Sydney.

Myles Joseph Dunphy was born in Melbourne in 1891. When he was about six years old his family moved to NSW and lived in the small seaside town of Kiama for a while. Dunphy's taste for the great outdoors developed here, first through ever lengthening beach walks and later through daylong treks into the surrounding countryside.

Dunphy's growing appetite for exploratory adventure was undiminished by his family's move to Sydney in 1907, when he was fifteen. With a group of mates that included Gallop, he would walk from the city centre to suburbs such as Parramatta and La Perouse, often covering more than 30 kilometres a day. Holiday trips to Kiama allowed the boys to explore the countryside in the hinterland.

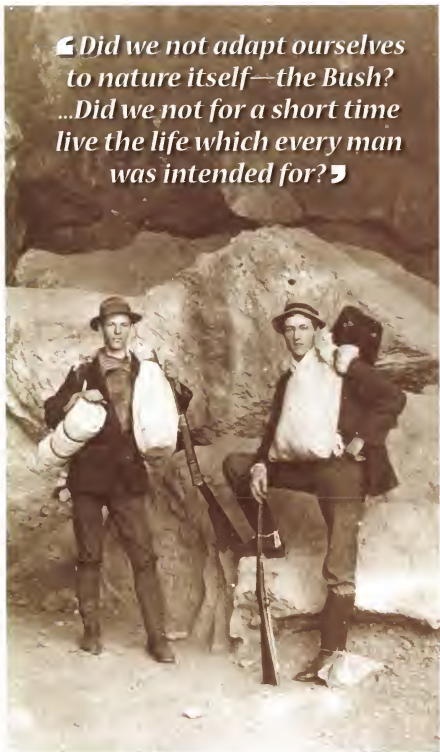
On Christmas Eve 1910, at the age of 19, Dunphy caught the train to Katoomba for a holiday that was to change his life. Later that day, from the edge of a sheer cliff on the southern side of the town, he contemplated a view that took his breath away. The mountains soon became pivotal to his view that Australia's wild landscapes should be insulated from the impacts of industrial progress so that they could provide sanctuary for city dwellers. 'The more complicated existence becomes, the more necessary it is to have this wonderful palliative handy to preserve the natural balance of minds...to preserve for the human race that connection with things natural and wholesome', he wrote.

Dunphy's 1912 bushwalk with Gallop was the first of many extended walks in the Blue Mountains he was to do during the next 20 years. Documenting his journeys with pen, sketchbook and camera, he filled in the gaps in the parish maps. He came to know every gully and peak of what had previously been the exclusive preserve of Aboriginals and, after 1860, of a few settlers seeking gold, cedar and cattle pasture.

He also slogged through many wild and not-so-wild areas up and down eastern NSW, from the Australian Alps to its lower north coast, and made several walks through the Victorian Alps. He was drawn irresistibly into these epic journeys not just by the allure of unfamiliar landscapes but also by the sheer pleasure of the wilderness experience, 'and for the education gained'.

'Did we not see great things?' he wrote. 'Did we not adapt ourselves to nature itself—the Bush?

«Did we not adapt ourselves
to nature itself—the Bush?
...Did we not for a short time
live the life which every man
was intended for?»



Dunphy (left) and Bert Gallop at Jenolan Caves during their walk through the Blue Mountains in October 1912.

Did we not pit ourselves against it, for it would have broken us, sure thing. Did we not for a short time live the life which every man was intended for?

Early on, Dunphy had adopted a set of techniques he considered best for long-distance, self-sufficient 'trailing', as bushwalking was then known. To him, trailing was a craft requiring the discipline of the classical Greeks, and he was always quick to differentiate it from 'hiking', which he saw as a trivial pastime. Trailers 'mooched' through terrain, absorbing its very essence; 'hikers' raced over the land without engaging with it.

For Dunphy, the incomparable thrill of the long trek was a virus he would never willingly shake off. In October 1913, after a handful of shorter walks in the Burrigorang Valley, he and Gallop (that 'veteran grade-slayer' with the smile 'that will not come off') penetrated eastwards from the southern end of the valley into what is now wilderness preserved in the Blue Mountains National Park. By then, experience had enabled him to whittle his load down to 19 kilograms, making for easier progress. Even so, the truly rugged terrain sometimes tested the duo's endurance to the utmost. After covering 257 kilometres, they finally 'staggered into Mittagong, worn out'.

During that expedition, Dunphy had his first glimpse of a river, the Kowmung, which was destined to draw him back time and again. He and Gallop returned to explore the river's upper reaches the following year, this time approaching from the north. If anything, it was an even rougher trip and again revealed how little was known about the country deep within the mountains.

Dunphy went back to the Kowmung in the spring of 1915 with another walker, George Matheson. While exploring the middle reaches of the river east of the cliffline known as Kanangra Walls, the pair clocked up 209 kilometres through what Dunphy eulogised as, 'beyond description the most interesting, wonderful, wild, beautiful place I ever saw'.

A bout of diphtheria and the resulting 'irritable' heart that beat irregularly if stressed limited his trips for the next three years, yet even in his invalid state he managed to complete a walk of 120 kilometres. His condition didn't dampen his thirst for long-distance adventuring. Quite the contrary—he made plans for increasingly ambitious enterprises that involved not just bushwalking but also canoeing. He must have also been influenced by the literature of this age of imperial adventure, for which the Australian public had an insatiable appetite. A reading list in one of Dunphy's notebooks included Livingstone's accounts of two of his African expeditions.

By 1918 Dunphy had come up with a scheme to become the first person to canoe the length of the Murray River. As if this river jaunt wasn't going to be enough, he decided to tack it on to a walk down the south coast of NSW from Kiama into Victoria. The entire venture would take a year. Dunphy was working as an architectural draughtsman and a teacher of architecture by this time, and when he gave notice to quit his job, his boss said he'd hold it open for him until he returned.

With Roy Davies, whom he described as 'the staunchest mate I have', and Jack Barker, who would tag along for three weeks, Myles set out from Kiama on 9 December 1919. Though he planned to stick to coastal roads for most of the trip, there would be occasional detours to wilder spots along the way. At the time Dunphy weighed just 50 kilograms but, as always, he made up for

his small stature with his wiry physique and limitless energy. He was carrying 24 kilograms of gear: the weight of his load was one kilogram shy of half his body weight.

During the initial southward leg he came upon a sight that crystallised his strong but rather formless feelings about mankind's place in the environment. A sawmill set deep in a forest of spotted gum caused him to wonder whether it would be possible to protect such magnificent growth from what he termed 'commercial vandalism'. It was at an epiphany on the road to Nelligen. Writing later of his views at that moment, he said: 'If there is any virtue in preserving anything of the good and unique things of this country for the aesthetic enjoyment of future generations—and I know there is—then the action must begin now.' (Such sentiments should be seen in light of the fact that Dunphy wrote or rewrote most of his journals decades after the events, and many years after he had become a leading light in the Australian conservation movement.)

On foot nearly all the way, though grudgingly accepting short lifts on two occasions, the travellers crossed into Victoria on 10

March 1920. Walking by way of Orbost, Buchan and Ensay, they reached Omeo in East Gippsland on 8 April where Dunphy picked up a letter from the Post Office telling him that his mother was dying. There was nothing for it but to cut short the grand adventure and head home. But by which route?

With the first snow expected at any moment, the choices were dwindling fast. Harrieville, 90 kilometres across the Alps, was the closest town that had public transport to the outside world. As no more mail coaches were heading that way before winter, the pair would have to walk there on what would later become the Great Alpine Road. After hastily stocking up on food, they set off the following day for a trek that Dunphy called 'our marathon across the High Tops'.

It turned out to be every bit as gruelling as they'd been warned. Through biting gales and icy rain, across windswept landscapes such as they'd never seen before, the walkers raced over the mountains and made it to the St Bernard Hospice, beyond Mt Hotham, by the end of the second day. For two days they'd dreamed of roast mutton, potatoes and pumpkin, and they were utterly disgusted when the hospice's new Scottish manager dished up scones and jam. 'To men hungry enough to eat a quarter of a sheep this was an insult to our empty stomachs', Dunphy wrote.

More than 700 kilometres and 17 weeks after the beginning of their trip, Dunphy and Davies trudged into Harrieville late the following day, caught a bus to Bright and then a train to Sydney.

His mother's death and its ramifications forced Dunphy to abandon his plan for a record-breaking Murray River journey in favour of a six-week paddle closer to home. In 1920 Dunphy and Davies, accompanied some of the way by two of Dunphy's brothers, paddled a canoe on Wallis, Smiths and Myall Lakes, north of Newcastle. This country had been logged for red cedar for more than a 100 years and the 400 kilometre expedition only reinforced Dunphy's views about the destructiveness of the forestry industry. He ended the trip convinced that the area, with its beautiful freshwater lakes, remnant vegetation and vast sweeps of dune and ocean beach, should be preserved in a continuous National Park running from Forster to near Williamtown.

The sight of forest destruction cast a shadow over many of Dunphy's journeys from that time on. During a 220 kilometre



Dunphy (left) and Roy Davies planning their route down the south coast of NSW in 1919.

mooch among the High Tops in 1921–1922, when he returned to explore the Victorian landscape he'd hurried through in 1920, he wrote of forestry: 'The speed with which the greatest natural gift that this continent was ever endowed with is disappearing, brands us as destroyers and not constructors, and such destruction is a curse which will come home to roost sure as fate.'

Dunphy's walks were becoming research tools for his environmental activism. His taste for long trips gave him access to places that few members of the public saw, and his talent for recognising the destructive impacts of humankind's exploitation of nature gave him ample ammunition for his meticulous submissions to government.

Neither marriage nor fatherhood could blunt Dunphy's enthusiasm for big adventures. After 1926 his young wife, Margaret, began accompanying him on some of his walks and was soon clocking up impressive distances. Nevertheless, Dunphy remained sceptical about the ability of what he called the 'softer sex' to complete self-sufficient long walks. Then in 1930 he led a party of seven young women ('girls', as he called them) down part of the Kowmung. He was astonished by their unflag-



Dunphy's boots after a long walk. Left, Milo Dunphy inspects the 'Kanangra Express', his vehicle for many a trip, before his first big outing in the bush in 1931.



ging exuberance and the energy and grit with which they defeated terrain that had repelled the early European explorers.

Dunphy became a father in 1929. He named his first son Milo Kanangra Dunphy, the second name after one of his favourite parts of the Blue Mountains. Milo's parents took him to Mt Kanangra and Kanangra Walls for two week's initiation into serious bushwalking in 1931, when he was only 20 months old. Rather than carry him, they opted to push him in a specially modified pram dubbed the 'Kanangra Express'. The couple shoved and hauled their son and nearly 80 kilograms of gear along 46 kilometres of rutted track from Oberon, on the eastern side of the Great Divide, across to Jenolan and Kanangra Walls. They then spent another week retracing their route, bringing the total distance covered to 93 kilometres, most of it 'sheer tribulation'.

The Kanangra Express got another outing the following year, when Myles and Margaret took Milo on a walking tour of the Myall Lakes region. Sticking to graded roads made the going easier and the family was able to put 170 kilometres behind them in 20 days.

Through these and several shorter journeys, not to mention hours of lovingly imparted instruction in bush lore, natural science and camping techniques, Myles turned Milo into a young replica of himself.

Milo wanted nothing more: as lean and wiry as his father, he was a lifelong bushwalker and lover of wild places and enthusiastically took up the battle to conserve them, a battle he carried on until his death.

In 1934, at the age of 42, Myles Dunphy set out with Norman Colton to explore the upper reaches of the Kowmung. In the torrid heat of high summer, he was labouring under a load of 32.6 kilograms, his heaviest ever. These factors, combined with the physical exertion needed to traverse the extremely rugged country, stressed his heart and he passed out in dense bush some distance short of the river. After Dunphy regained consciousness, Colton helped him stagger to the Kowmung and left him there while he went to fetch help. Nine days later Dunphy was carried into the township of Yerrandene on a stretcher borne by a rescue party of bushwalkers.

It was the last big expedition Dunphy attempted. For years

afterwards he went on shorter walks, still carrying a heavy load and stubbornly refusing to adopt new, lightweight gear. In place of marathon walks he devoted his time to environmental campaigning, using his thoroughness, organisation and the knowledge he'd gained of the bush.

Despite his heart condition, he lived healthily into his 80s and died in 1985, aged ninety-three.

The activist

Myles Dunphy began agitating for the conservation of wild areas in the mid-1920s, initially through bushwalking groups and later through the National Parks & Primitive Areas Council, which he helped to set up for the purpose in 1932. In 1934 he publicised a plan for a vast reserve protecting his beloved Blue Mountains. One of our biggest and best known natural reserves, the Blue Mountains National Park remains Dunphy's greatest bequest to the nation. But it is only one of many areas that he proposed for protection that eventually became National Parks and reserves. Among the larger of these are Barrington Tops, Brisbane Water, Deua, Garawarra, Heathcote, Kosciuszko, Morton, Murramarang, Myall Lakes, Warrumbungle and Werrikimbe.

Myles Dunphy was awarded the OBE in 1977 for his conservation work, and the Fred M Packard International Merit award from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in 1984. ●

Peter Meredith

is a journalist and a lifelong lover of wild places. He is the author of *Myles and Milo*, a biography of Myles and Milo Dunphy. Thanks to the Dunphy family, the Ecology Foundation for Wilderness, the Total Environment Centre and the State Library of NSW.



Breathing in the BIBBULMUN

Elise Batchelor follows Western Australia's epic track through the forests of the State's south-west

IT'S A MIGHTY LONG WAY FROM PERTH TO Albany, particularly if you decide to walk. WA's Bibbulmun Track provides the opportunity to do just that. Inspired by Victoria's Alpine Way and the famous Appalachian Trail in the USA, the Bibbulmun Track is a 946 kilometre track that winds from the forests of the Perth Hills down through a majestic region of towering trees to the coast near Albany. Geoff Schafer, a bush-walker and ex-Victorian, conceived of a 'Perth to Albany Track' in 1972. The route was officially opened in 1979 and named after the Bibbulmun, an Aboriginal people once known for their long-distance walking. WA's Department of Conservation & Land Management has upgraded the track twice since, and the present route was officially opened in the late 1990s.

I had been keen to walk through WA's forests for some time and the 'tall trees' region of the track appeared an excellent destination. I had also been captivated by the bumbling misadventures of writer Bill Bryson in *A Walk in the Woods* as he told of his weeks of walking along the Appalachian Trail. Internationally renowned, this 3450 kilometre track stretching between Georgia and Maine has small towns along its length where walkers can re-supply in order to cover long distances unsupported. The modern Bibbulmun Track emulates this style of walk; its route intersects rural communities at four–six day intervals.

My walking companion Rob and I decided on an eight-day trip of around 160 kilometres. It passed through a hearty chunk of forest between the sleepy hamlet of Balingup, three hours south of Perth, and the mill town of Pemberton in the heart of 'Karri Country'. Ours was hardly a grand departure—we got a lift with friends to our starting-point on the edge of Balingup and began the journey together. They were keen to experience the Bibbulmun Track themselves and planned to walk for at least half an hour before returning to enjoy cap-

puccinos in town. Our packs were laden with gear and food for six days and I was trying to maintain a grin under the oppressive weight. Our friends wore packs that seemed to mock my pain—little black designer numbers with enough room for an apple, a bottle of water and a mobile phone.

Contrary to normal walking procedure, I was also opting to begin without a map. I had purchased the official guidebook for the southern section of the Bibbulmun Track, a meaty little number that didn't cover the route until we reached Donnelly River Village in three days' time. Despite a vague unease about the lack of a map I felt confident that navigation would be simple as the track is well marked. Bright yellow, triangular markers depicting an Aboriginal dreamtime serpent, the Waugul, appear frequently along the track in both directions. Navigation was fine, although a missed Waugul on the first day added half an hour to our travels and much cheek to my companion's afternoon singing.

The first day was a reminder of the mix of wilderness and civilisation through which the Bibbulmun route passes. Between the small forest area on the outskirts of Balingup and Blackwood Shelter in the lush hills 16 kilometres further on we passed through farming land. The only companions we had after farewelling our caffeine-deprived friends were a bunch of munching cows in surrounding paddocks. This might seem off-putting on a walk but it is an intermittent necessity on a track that is designed to encourage everything from day walks to longer overnight trips and the complete end-to-end experience.

Top, Waugul markers appear frequently along the track in both directions. **Left**, marri trees such as this one tower above the Bibbulmun Track. **Right**, Rob Whitehead shows off his bulging pack while observing the surrounding bush. All uncredited photos Rob Whitehead





Vehicle access to overnight camp-sites is not possible on the track—reaching each shelter requires a walk of at least a few kilometres. We were not sure whether to expect fellow travellers at the shelter and thought we might have to use our tent as we'd had a late start. Upon arriving, worn out, at the Blackwood Shelter at the dimming hour of 4.30 pm, we were delighted to discover that it was empty. These shelters are quite a treat—at each night's official camp-site there is a sturdy, three-walled hut with room to house at least a dozen people—equipped with a water tank, pit toilet, bench and seats for meals, and a fire pit if fires are permitted. Our weary bodies luxuriated in this personal space and its sublime view over hills and valleys on what was to prove a chilly night.

Now, I'm a crack-of-dawn type of girl—a beneficial trait when walking. So I'll never know how I slept from 8 pm until 10 am the next morning! Although we were determined to get up and going, this didn't prevent Rob and me from browsing through what was to become a highly entertaining part of our journey. The walkers' book is the heart of each shelter; a place for walkers to register their presence, their day's experi-

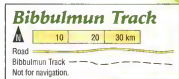
ences, their bad writing or their illuminating outlook on the Bibbulmun. Whilst many tracks possess such registers, these were well used and often made intriguing reading. We were a day behind someone calling himself 'Mossman' who was hiking solo from Balingup to Pemberton. We soon felt as though he, among others, was the walking companion whom we had never met, and never might. As we continued, reading the registers gave us a strong sense that we were travelling alongside many others, even though we only ever came close enough to follow their elusive footsteps.

The walkers' book indicated that we had further to travel on the second day so we kept track of Wauguls and maintained a steady pace. After completing walks in the Victorian High Country where it has taken 21 days to walk 100 kilometres, the thought of covering 160 kilometres in little more than a week was daunting. However, the Bibbulmun Track is mostly flat, with interspersed areas of hills and river-crossings. It was a joy to be able to stride along the track sur-

rounded by increasingly thick forests of WA's famous jarrah and marri trees. That day the glorious sight of red-winged black cockatoos making low-level passes overhead, and the spectacle of a terrified Rob nearly stumbling over slumbering tiger snakes—not once but three times—distracted me from my heavy pack and the kilometres ahead.



After completing walks in the Victorian High Country where it has taken 21 days to walk 100 kilometres, the thought of covering 160 kilometres in little more than a week was daunting.



There is a species of walker on the Bibbulmun Track known as 'End-to-Enders'; these hearty souls take on the entire eight-week journey either north or south. We experienced our only encounter with this type of walker on our third day and, boy, were they a weary-looking lot! Halfway through the epic and headed north, three walkers were slumped beside their packs, wearily chewing morning munchies. Of the three, only two seemed able to speak: how was it going? Oh, it was long, very long. Tired was an understatement. The woman who was third in their party only managed a grim and quickly fading smile, although she did contribute an 'mmm' when her comrades mentioned how much they were looking forward to a rest day in Balingup in three days' time. In the walkers' book on the previous evening, I'd noted Mossman's comment

that he was looking forward to fish and chips at Donnelly River Village. This bunch didn't look as though they had procured such a feast, so I didn't mention how much I was looking forward to my fish and chips that night.

Donnelly River Village marks the halfway point of the Bibbulmun Track and is a supply

As we left Donnelly River on the fourth morning we were surrounded by emus and kangaroos, now accustomed to visitors; one emu even following the track with us. Now with the additional security of a map, we headed off towards Tom Road Shelter through increasingly thick karri forest. And then it began to



point for food for the next five days. Whilst nightly camp-sites along the Bibbulmun offer a shelter for the walker, Donnelly provides two. A thriving mill town until 1978, it had small shops, timber workers' houses and a primary school. Nowadays, the boys' and girls' shelter sheds on the primary-school grounds provide the official 'Bibbulmun Shelter'. We actually lashed out that night on quirky hostel accommodation—the old teachers' staff room at the end of a school corridor is a slightly more up-market alternative. Complete with a couple of old bunks and an oven, a pin board on one wall and a large black-board on another, we felt we were in the lap of luxury. However, all was not as planned: fish-and-chips night was Tuesday night and we'd arrived on a Wednesday so we were left peering forlornly at two frozen pasties we'd mustered just as the shop was closing.

pour. Our emu quickly disappeared, no doubt homeward to ruffle his feathers somewhere dry. Rob and I readjusted our clothing to suit the conditions, which would remain with us for the next four days and 80 kilometres.

Of course, constant rain in this forest is not such a bad thing. Peering up, I realised that trees that can live for more than 100 years, reach ninety metres in height and absorb up to 170 litres of water a day deserve as much rain as possible. There is also something powerful about walking through a looming karri forest in the brisk air. Two days and two evenings later at Boarding House Shelter, with the rain still quenching the karri trees and filling the water tanks, our muscles were weary, our bones were worn and our whole beings waterlogged. We had been winding through karri forest within the valley surrounding the Donnelly



A New Holland honey-eater clings to a branch while feeding. Left, the author examines the younger karris that surround her as she perches on a dead giant.

River and it was humbling to think that our journey was taking us through wilderness that could not be seen unless visited on foot.

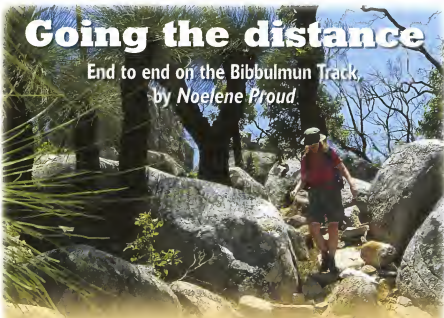
Early in our journey I had suggested to Rob that we might complete two days' walk in one day at some point, just for the challenge. On day six, with the rain pouring continuously, we decided not to chase that idea. We'd noted a particularly keen variety of contributor in the walkers' book: the 'double-hutter'. These walkers would discuss with nonchalance their successful efforts to complete two days of walking in one. 'Hell-Man' Stan casually wrote of such an effort, despite missing the track completely at the midway point and taking a ten kilometre detour! I admired such endurance.

I'd grown accustomed to the evening luxury of boiling the stove for a warm wash. It was with some urgency on the evening of day six at Beavis camp-site that I scrambled back into my smelly thermals mid-bathe after hearing voices emerging from the depths of the track. During most of the year the Bibbulmun is not teeming with people and you might go several days without sighting another person, so it was a shock to be half-naked with a bunch of people traipsing towards me.

Modesty intact, I greeted the five walkers as they plodded towards the shelter. Later that night they provided much amusement as we watched their unfeasibly large food supplies emerge from rucksacks heavier than ours. Friends out for the long weekend, they called themselves 'The Crazy Walkers Association' and while my colleague and I pondered our dried vegies on couscous, they prepared a gourmet feast. Tonight it was red wine with lashings of goulash and fresh

Going the distance

End to end on the Bibbulmun Track
by Noeline Proud



Annie Keating is dwarfed by charred grass-trees as she begins the descent down the south side of Mt Cooke. Noeline Proud

'I must do the Bibbulmun one day'—how many times had I said that? Here was a great walk in my own backyard that demanded my attention.

I did the whole track in one go, except for two days in the north that I was forced to skip because of a bushfire. In an ideal world you could wander along, taking your time, but in reality the walk requires a big chunk of time off work. Most walkers take six-eight weeks to walk the track and, like most people, I needed to fit the walk into my leave. Walking to a new shelter each day including overnight stays in towns would take 57 days. However, the shelters near Perth are close together and most people can 'double hut' in this area.

I'm one of those people who find planning half the fun so a walk of this length is nirvana: supplies to organise, finding accommodation in towns (and, more importantly, a shower) and poring over maps and distances. While it is possible to re-supply in towns en route, I had a friend who forwarded parcels (food, clean socks, toothpaste, the next map...) to my accommodation in the towns. North-south or south-north? Give an End-to-Ender five hours and they'll try to summarise the reasons for their walking direction. I love coastal walking so went north to south, saving the best for last.

I began around Easter—this and the school holidays meant that I had company for the first week. On Easter Sunday I spent the night with 30 others at White Horse Hills Shelter, which is designed for eight people. Luckily a lot of them had tents and the Easter Bunny had his burrow. Once the school holidays finished there weren't many walkers and I usually had the shelters to myself. I didn't see another walker on the track for eight days after the day I walked into Balingup. A friend met me in Walpole and we walked the remaining 200 kilometres or so to Albany.

The track passes through nine National Parks and up to nine towns, depending on your definition of 'town'. Although it is 200 kilometres from the northern terminus to

Dwellingup, the first town encountered, its proximity to Perth, road access, a pub and a few other facilities mean that the longest stretch between re-supply is generally considered to be the 135 kilometres from Northcliffe to Walpole. During this stretch my pack was at its heaviest, bulging with food supplies for the next six days. It is fortunate that the terrain is flat and the tracks were dry.

Struggling in the unseasonably warm weather at the beginning, I tried to think about one day at a time, soon I discovered that if I took care of each day's walking, the walk as a whole took care of itself. I had a break from pack carrying for a couple of days (thanks to support crew near Perth) which let me cover a few extra kilometres and gave my feet a break.

Waking up on crisp, cold and misty mornings in the karri forests near Pemberton and Donnelly River Village was a highlight. I also relished the gale-force winds and crashing waves on the beaches of the Southern Ocean. Memorable wildlife encounters include a quenda (southern brown bandicoot) at Gringer Creek Shelter and a majestic owl near Beavis Shelter. The indestructible, all-weather mozzies at Long Point Shelter weren't quite so good—howling gale, torrential rain and freezing temperatures couldn't stop these buzzing buggers.

I enjoyed the company and camaraderie of fellow walkers, as well as reading their advice and comments in hut-book entries. I was warned about the rat under the water tank at Boarding House Shelter long before I got there!

After six weeks and 930 kilometres, I walked into Albany the fittest I have ever been. I returned to the Mt Cooke area six months later to complete the two days I had missed due to the bushfire.

Someone much more articulate than I observed: 'The Bib Track isn't very hard, it is just very long.'

Noeline Proud goes walking as much as possible, in Western Australia and further afield. When tent-bound by the nine-to-five she buys far too many maps.

bread. A decadent home-made cake then appeared from a pack and, along with the cream, fed this CWA better than any Country Women's Association cake bake ever could.

As the evening continued, it was time to see how Mossman, Stan and the rest of the gang were faring on their Bibbulmun journeys. We read the saga of the bloke heading



north who'd double-hutted from Pemberton to Boarding House after reaching his initial destination and being met by a gaggle of teenage exchange students. Appealing as the ratio had been, he'd reasoned that he actually wanted sleep more than anything, so he'd opted to power on to Beavis Shelter—another twenty kilometres and all in the dark! Our most important discovery as we read the book that night filled our bellies with anticipation. Not being locals, we'd failed to take in the significance of the fact that the next day's track to Beedelup Falls actually passed within a kilometre of the luxury Karri Valley Resort. It was definitely a case of early to bed, early to rise, so that we could reach the resort in time to hunt down some edible treats.

There's nothing like the promise of a Devonshire tea to propel the hungry walker out of a cosy sleeping-bag at a ridiculous hour of the morning. That morning I felt a small pang of guilt at the idea of dining at a restaurant in the midst of a walk, but after a

week in the bush it was a very small pang. The wet walk of day seven through karri forest was stunning and Beedelup Falls were beautiful, but the jam was home-made, the cream freshly whipped and the steaming scones out of this world. We managed to devour pasties and chips before heading off to Beedelup Shelter, but that night we were back to more normal fare—'Deb' potato

whether it had been a whole tree falling, or just one of the enormous branches of this gentle giant turned 'widow maker'.

Journeying through the karri forest had been a privilege and our final day on the track seemed a poetic reversal of our first day's journey through Balingup farm land. A long day's walk for the Bibbulmun, the 23 kilometres to Pemberton took us out of the karri forest and past properties dotted with quizzical cows. Hints of civilisation grew with increasing numbers of four-wheel-drive tracks,

then gravel roads and soon a bitumen highway. As dusk encroached and Rob and I reached Pemberton, every bone in my body ached but the reward was all in the effort. That morning it had seemed like farewelling old friends as we closed the walkers' book for the last time and that evening I pondered the ongoing journey of the End-to-Enders.

'Freedom means choosing your burden', wrote Hephzibah Menuhin. Hiking through the tall trees on the epic Bibbulmun Track, we'd chosen well. 🐾



Thick forest surrounds the author as she crosses the Donnelly River on a karri bridge. Below, wildlife is plentiful along the Bibbulmun Track.



and dehydrated onion. However, we raised the tone of dinner by eating off doilies souvenired from the restaurant.

Amongst the tall trees of the south-west, the question 'if a tree falls in the forest does anybody hear it?' has quite a simple answer. As the seven of us slept, this came to us unexpectedly, in an ominous voice 'talking' to us through the trees. At about midnight there was a sudden, monstrous cracking sound like the bones of an ageing giant breaking. This was followed by a surging rip as a karri tree plummeted somewhere into the dark behind our shelter. We all sat bolt upright and spent the next hour debating





TROPICAL DAYS

Misty Mountains Express

Paul Curtis explores a new network of walks in north Queensland

THE WET TROPICS WORLD HERITAGE AREA of north Queensland is a 9000 square kilometre blanket of green where peaks rise from deep, narrow gorges cut by fast-flowing perennial streams. A few roads and tracks penetrate the edges of this wilderness but without some local knowledge a 'Wet Tropics' wilderness experience eludes most visitors.

Until very recently the opportunities for a long-distance wilderness walk in north Queensland through spectacular and worthwhile country has been limited to the Thorsborne Track on Hinchinbrook Island. Its deserved popularity has led to restrictions in the numbers of visitors and the subsequent need to book months in advance.

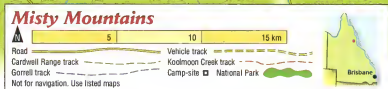
Now there is another good reason to find yourself in north Queensland with a rucksack and a sturdy pair of walking boots. In August 2003 the Misty Mountains track network was officially opened

after two years of planning and 12 months of construction. Almost a million dollars has been spent on the development of infrastructure including the clearing of 130 kilometres of tracks, signs at the nine track heads and two new camping grounds.

The area

The Misty Mountains encompass a large tract of country roughly bounded by the towns of Ravenshoe, Millaa Millaa, Innisfail and Tully. A network of logging roads traversed the Cardwell and Walter Hill Ranges decades ago but until recently most of these roads were overgrown to the point of being unrecognisable and almost unwalkable. A number of them have now been cleared to walking standard and incorporated into a network of tracks that may be tackled as walks of two-three days or as a continuous walk of ten days or longer.

The Misty Mountains live up to their name. This early morning shot is taken from the top of Rhyolite Pinnacle. All uncredited photos by the author



In most cases the rampant growth of vegetation, landslides and flooding rains ensure that while on these old 'roads' it doesn't feel as though you are walking along a road, while the grades are no steeper than a loaded logging truck could manage in the old days. To provide continuity for walkers many of these roads are connected by rough and narrow walking tracks that can be very steep and not as well marked.

Having walked all the tracks, one of my few disappointments is that if the walks are tackled individually they are all one-way, requiring some organisation and expense for the drop-off and collection if you are not simply to retrace your steps. Most tracks also begin and end several hundred metres in altitude apart so logically if walking one-way (west to east) you start from the high country and walk down to the low. This is another reason to contemplate a long-distance circuit walk that will return you several days later to your transport. Plans are afoot to provide a commercial service to collect walkers and return them to town or car—this will eventually happen. At the moment it can be up to 200 kilometres by road between two of the track heads!

However, there will be substantial rewards for your efforts. All the tracks lead through a cross-section of the best scenery that the wet tropics has to offer. There are plenty of wild mountain streams to cross, waterfalls to view and mountain-top lookouts to attain, all connected by tracks through dense and frequently spectacular rainforest. There are a few sections of open canopy that have not completely recovered from the logging days, mostly in the vicinity of the track heads.

The walks

All the walks described were undertaken in September and October of 2003, just after

they were opened to the public. Good friends and fellow *Wild* contributors Steven Nowakowski and Sally Goulet accompanied me on some walks while on others I reluctantly accompanied myself! At the time the tracks were empty. During nine days of walking I only encountered two other small groups but this will have changed over the last couple of years. Consider making plans soon!

As I see it, there are three main walks in the Misty Mountains.

The Cardwell Range track

This leaves from the Tully Falls road, crosses the Cardwell Range and descends into the Cannabullen Creek valley. It passes a worthwhile short detour to the top of Majors Mountain before crossing Cannabullen Creek and tributaries a number of times to join up with the track to Cannabullen Falls—another worthwhile detour. This walk is about 27 kilometres (if visiting Majors Mountain and the falls) and would take a minimum of two days. Start early to get to the summit while the light is nice and the temperature cool. Camp at the last crossing of Cannabullen Creek where an old, weathered, concrete causeway has created a picturesque environment. The designated camp-site is a couple of hundred metres to the east of the crossing. On the last day, walk to the turn-off to the spectacular Cannabullen Falls. A three-hour return walk takes you to the top of the falls



Paul Curtis and Sally Goulet enjoying a cuppa on top of the Rhyolite Pinnacle, 'one of the best vantage points in the wet tropics'.

Steven Nowakowski

where there are great views down the valley. Unfortunately it is almost impossible to get good views of the falls; take extreme care descending the track to the creek. Return to the track junction and on to the eastern track head.

The nifty-gritty

The scenery improves as you head east; wander around Majors Mountain summit for the best views but watch out for young stinging trees growing on and around the tracks in this area. At the time of writing, the last few hundred metres to Cannabullen

Falls were (purposely?) inadequately marked and I believe some work is yet to be done to sort out better access to the falls.

The Koolmoon Creek track

This also departs from the Tully Falls road and there are a few options. Four track heads

Grant Falls lookout or right to the track head and camping ground at Cochable Creek. The two-hour return walk to the lookout is worth while as a clearing allows you to see Koolmoon Creek dropping 300 metres over Elizabeth Grant Falls. However, there is no access to the falls from the lookout.



along this road feed into a central track that follows Koolmoon Creek from its headwaters to its confluence with the Tully River some 35 kilometres away.

This is at least a three-day walk if the longest route is taken. It first traverses some high-altitude, rainforested ridges around the thousand metre contour, eventually ascending the cleverly named Rhyolite Pinnacle for some exceptional views of heavily forested ridges and valleys that stretch almost as far as the eye can see. In fact, I would say it is one of the best vantage points in the wet tropics. From here it's downhill all the way, crossing Koolmoon Creek at Walters Waterhole and then following a traditional Aboriginal track down a steep descent to the final Koolmoon crossing near Tully River—a drop of about 800 metres in altitude. Definitely better walking west to east! From this crossing you scramble out of the Koolmoon valley to a ridgetop intersection where you can turn left to Elizabeth

than roughly cleared areas without facilities. When crossing Koolmoon Creek near Walters Waterhole the track takes you away from the old bridge, which may be considered a dangerous crossing point but is worth having a look at. Some parts of the steep descent down to the last Koolmoon crossing are hazardous—take care, allow plenty of time and carry plenty of water. At the end of the wet season (from April onwards) the creeks will be high and running swiftly so you can forget about not getting your feet wet! The Tully Falls road is not accessible from the Tully Gorge road.

The Gorrell track

This track begins two kilometres up the road from the South Johnstone camping ground, accessible by conventional vehicle from the Palmerston Highway. Spend your first night here on the banks of the South Johnstone River for an early start for this two-day, 26 kilometre walk.

Allow three days if you plan on spending time at Downey Creek; an easy three-hour walk down takes you to this creek, one of the most picturesque streams in north Queensland. There is a camp-site a couple of hundred metres to the east of the causeway crossing and a nice waterfall a few hundred metres downstream. Consider bringing in an inflatable Lilo for exploration as the creek can be deep and wide. Heading east the track ascends the Unnamed Range (my name!) and down through some country damaged by cyclones on the coastal side of the range. Pass through an incredible grove of king ferns at 'Angiopteris Avenue' as you descend to the major attraction of the McNamee Creek crossing; definitely worth a swim. From here it's an hour to the Mena Creek track head.

The nifty-gritty

I've saved the best for last! If your time is limited this is one to consider. Until recently this through walk was almost impossible but the resurrection of old tracks has created a great bushwalk. All the grades are very easy, especially when walking west to east, and

☛ The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area of north Queensland is a 9000 square kilometre blanket of green where peaks rise from deep, narrow gorges cut by fast-flowing perennial streams. ☚

Back on the track it's a short, easy descent to the track head and camping ground (with facilities) at Cochable Creek and exit to civilisation by the Tully Gorge road.

The nifty-gritty

The designated track-side camp-sites are very ordinary, as are most on the Misty Mountains tracks. At the moment they are nothing more

than the general scenery is great. I am in awe of the engineering that went into constructing this road in remote wilderness, and equally in awe of how well nature is reclaiming it.

Paul's big walk

Here is an ideal walk that will take you through a variety of scenery and return you to your car.

Start at the Koolmoon headwaters track-head off the Tully Falls road and descend to the Cochable Creek camp-site (three days). Ascend the Cannabullen Creek link-track up to the vicinity of the Hinson Creek camp-site near the Cannabullen Falls turn-off. (Allow a day for this 13 kilometre walk that crosses many creeks over the gradual

scenic and interesting as the rest of the network because it is a vehicular road.

Walk facts

Permits and fees are not required for day walkers. However camping fees of \$4.00 a person a night are payable in advance—there is no self-registration.

Camping permits can be obtained and paid for online at www.smartaccess.qld.gov.au—be prepared for lots of submenus and prompts. You can download maps and information at www.misty-mountains.com.au. Phone bookings can be made on 131 304 (eight o'clock to six o'clock weekdays).

Suggested walk times on the official brochure/map are very conservative. As the grades are easy and while the tracks remain in good condition walkers can expect to cover three-four kilometres an hour, plus distractions.

Access may be restricted during the wet season (November–March) and some access gates may be locked. Walking conditions during this time will be hot and humid, if not pouring with torrential rain which makes many of the creek crossings impossible.

Even in the dry season drinking-water is usually obtainable no more than two hours apart.

All track heads are accessible by conventional vehicles (except in the wet season)



Paul Curtis

moved to north Queensland in 1984 after growing tired of the 1800 kilometre drive to get to truly wild country from Brisbane. Photography is his driving force—his goal is to have a photographic representation of north Queensland's wilderness that is second to none. His book, *Traveller's Guide to North Queensland* is in its third reprint. He has contributed to four editions of *Wild* including two *Folios*.

The author enjoying the Misty Mountains peace at an unnamed creek in the Downey Creek valley.

500 metre climb.) From here you join the Cardwell Range track that will take you back to the Tully Falls road after another day and a half, from where you can draw straws as to who walks the six kilometres back down the bitumen road to collect the car (or you might score a lift)! It should take six-eight days in total. If this isn't long enough, from the Hinson Creek camp-site you could make a day walk out of the Cannabullen Falls track, then walk along the 20 kilometre Maple Creek road to the Gorrell (Downey Creek) track head, and then three days down to Mena Creek. This will take about ten days; however, the day's walk along Maple Creek road is not as



Paul Curtis and Sally Goullet crossing Koolmoon Creek in the dry season. In autumn or early winter there would be an extra half metre of water!
Nowakowski

and are generally well signposted from Tully, Bruce Highway, Palmerston Highway, Millaa Millaa, Ravenshoe and Tully Falls road.

Reference maps are the 1:50 000 *Millaa Millaa* (8062 4) and *Mena Creek* (8062 1).

I hope I have whetted your appetite for the wet tropics; there is so much more to see and experience. I have left out much and deliberately avoided going overboard with descriptions of the scenery and have made no mention of things such as the amazing dawn chorus of birds in a remote north Queensland rainforest wilderness. (Whoops, let that one through!) I am very excited about the opportunity presented by these walks. Rarely has such an experience been opened up practically overnight in Australia.

I shall be returning again and again to these places at different times of the day and year to immerse myself in the sights, smells and sounds of the Misty Mountains. ☺

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Enjoy really good coffee on your next trip!



Why not enjoy a delicious espresso with the sturdy, yet lightweight aluminium **GSI Espresso Maker**? Simply fill the basket with well-ground coffee, add water to valve level and screw the unit shut. Place it on your stove at low heat and within minutes, the steam pipe delivers a flavourful cup of European-style brew. Available in one- and four-cup sizes; red, blue, green or polished. Cups and espresso makers are also available in stainless steel.

Or if you prefer to brew great coffee regardless of where you are, try the new **Lexan® JavaPress™**. Perfect for camping, backpacking, boats, caravans and car camping; just add boiling water to coffee grounds, let stand for a minute or two and you will have a perfect cup of fresh coffee. The **GSI JavaPress** is dishwasher safe and can also be used for preparing tea! Available in 280 ml, 925 ml and 1.5 L sizes.



Lexan® Waterproof Utility Boxes

LEXAN® Waterproof Utility Boxes are nearly indestructible; available in three sizes. They are clear, so you can see what's inside, and have attachment loops to tie them down securely!



Lexan® is lightweight and tough.
 Local for your next trip!



LEXAN® is the toughest thermo-plastic available... with high impact strength, dimensional stability and temperature performance from -55°C to +130°C. It's dishwasher- and microwave safe and incredibly lightweight.

You can make a complete, convenient setting from our range of 2 bowls, large plate and knife, fork, spoon and teaspoon. And they won't burn your fingers! Colours: cutlery - Eggshell or Emerald (above), plates and bowls - Glacier Ice or Emerald.



Cutlery is available in bulk, or in three- or four-piece sets. Even smaller is the Tekk range of cutlery (right).



The **GSI Lexan® Wine Glasses and Flutes** are the perfect addition for your next camping trip or picnic. The patent pending design tapers at the midpoint of the stem, so the base can be compactly snapped into the bowl for packing and storage. Super lightweight and nearly indestructible, yet elegantly shaped.



The **GSI H2O Bottle** in Lexan, is designed to be easy to grip, and has a standard thread so you can use it with a water filter.

Much better than those plain and boring cylindrical bottles, it's tapered for ease of storing in pockets. And, yes, it comes in a range of four colours - red, blue, purple and yellow | litre.



Bugaboo™ Teflon/Aluminium Cook-sets

The aluminium **Bugaboo™** cook-sets are lightweight and the Teflon interior coating makes cleaning a breeze! The sets nest compactly and the lids act as fry pans. A **DiamondBack Gripper™** and mesh storage-bag are included in each set.

GSI exclusively distributed in Australia by Spelean Pty Ltd Ph. 1 800 634 853 for your nearest dealer e-mail info@spelean.com.au <http://www.spelean.com.au>

The Rams Head Range

Off the beaten track in the Snowy Mountains, by Stephen Curtain



Serene alpine tarns dot the weathered landscape of the Rams Head Range. Stephen Curtain

These Track Notes have been held back from publication in order to allow more time for this fragile area to regenerate. Although the text has been updated, please be aware that things (such as vegetation and man-made structures) may have altered since the 2003 fires.

SOUTH OF KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK'S MOST FAMOUS LANDMARK is an often ignored string of modest granite peaks. From Mt Kosciuszko's summit you can discern the Rams Head Range from west to east in the form of undulating, grassy plains. While nearby peaks such as Mt Townsend and Mt Twynam satisfy most walkers' 'big-mountain' needs, the Rams Head Range will reward the curious walker with an array of intriguing perspectives—from the intricacies of gigantic tor formations to serene alpine tarns born from spring snow melt, to unusual views of neighbouring mountains.

'Care for the Alps: leave no trace' is the official, minimal-impact maxim publicised by the Australian Alps National Parks agencies. This could not hold more true than when you traverse this range on the walk described. Ensure that you walk on hard surfaces such as rocks and hardy tussocks rather than on delicate moss beds and sphagnum bogs. The health of the latter ensures the constant trickle of clean water into the headwaters of two Australian river icons in this area—the Snowy and the Murray. Similarly, carry out human waste in strong bags. These practices are a small sum to pay for the serenity of this ancient, weathered landscape.

When to go

After the thick mantle of snow has largely melted from the Main Range; walking is most pleasant in the summer and early autumn.

Access

Head towards Thredbo on the Alpine Way. Park your vehicle at the car park at the junction of the Alpine Way and Cascade Track, several kilometres west of Thredbo. If your party has another vehicle leave it at Ngarigo camp-site, about eight kilometres east of Thredbo, for a car shuttle at the end of the walk. Otherwise, you will have to chance thumbing a ride.

The walk

An early start is recommended, say 8 am, to allow for a relaxed tempo throughout the day. Walk over the road bridge and take the well formed walking track that ascends the spur on the east side of Bogong Creek. As you walk higher, the gurgle of white water in the Thredbo River recedes and views of the surrounding high country begin to reveal themselves through gaps in the snow gums. In particular, as you face south you can trace the path of the Murray River valley to its source between the Pilot and—across the State border—the often moody bulk of the Cobberas.

Continue on to reach the open expanses of snow grass above the tree line—a good spot for a rest. Glancing uphill, you should be able to find one or two rock-cairns. Follow these as they will eventually guide you to the saddle at the head of Bogong Creek. (The rock-cairns are on the creek's eastern bank.) Head north for about a kilometre before going east for the same distance to intercept an elevated, metallic-grid walkway—the track linking Thredbo's Crackenback chair-lift station with Mt Kosciuszko, about five kilometres away. Dodge the onslaught of day walkers and continue eastward.

The route now largely follows the crest of the Rams Head Range—ill-defined at times but straightforward to follow in clear conditions. It's a different story in heavy white-out conditions! At such a time, you may choose to follow a general northerly bearing to reach the Kosciuszko summit track. At least from there, you can choose to head back to Thredbo by way of the Kosciuszko metallic-grid walkway (dubiously nicknamed by some as the lightning-rod) or you can 'hoof it' eastward along that track to the safety of Charlottes Pass village.

If you are fortunate to have clear weather, continue on and climb to the top of any prominent boulder stack and enjoy the superb vistas over the far, southern fall of the Rams Head Range. Above the obvious swath of the Alpine Way, Paddy Rushes Bogong (1920 metres) is the distinctive peak that rises on the other side of the Thredbo River.

Be cautious as you traverse the high, lumpy tussocks of snow grass that separate many hidden and overgrown soil depressions. The alternative may be a rolled ankle! Similarly, short distances of such grassy ground can be deceptively slow and tiring to walk—just be sure to pace yourself.

If time permits consider a side-trip to Mt Stilwell at GR 185657. From its summit of jumbled tors you overlook the alpine village of Charlottes Pass. Further afield, over the western shoulder of Mt Guthrie, you can glimpse the country that falls away to the valley of an infant Snowy River. Elsewhere in the background a patchwork of snowdrifts often adorns the lee sides of many peaks, even in late summer. Late on a frigid night some years ago, a distant thunderstorm was close enough for its flashes of light-

ning to be reflected fleetingly on the largest of these snowdrifts, yet distant enough not to be heard—an awe-inspiring sight despite my fits of shivering.

Begin to look for the night's camp somewhere among a protective band of snow gums between 1900 and 2000 metres. Water can be collected from one of the nearby creeks.

Day two

Again, ensure that you get an early start. As you traverse the high ground south of Trapyard Creek's headwaters you may come to an old, dilapidated fence-line. Following this is a relatively easy route

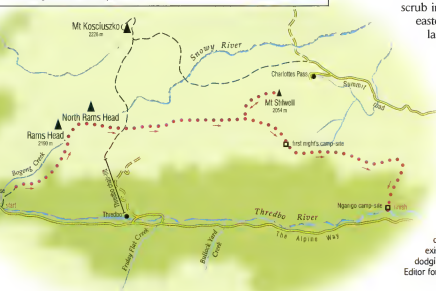
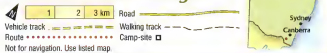
the walk AT A GLANCE

Grade	Hard
Length	Two days
Distance	15 kilometres
Type	Mountain scenery, alpine plains
Region	Snowy Mountains, south-east New South Wales
Start, finish	Start at Cascade Track car park, finish at Ngargo camp-site
Maps	Kosciuszko and Thredbo 1:50 000
Best time	Summer and early autumn
Special points	Fuel-stove-only area. A fee is payable upon entry to Kosciuszko National Park. Be prepared for all weather, including snow



Robert Martin explores the gigantic, jumbled tors of North Rams Head. John Chapman

The Rams Head Range



to a saddle at GR 213651, except for a brief patch of thick scrub immediately west of the saddle. Continue in an easterly, then north-easterly direction to pass over a large knoll to arrive at a saddle at GR 232659.

Ignore the pole line that leads across this saddle and wade through the heath to its eastern side.

Northward, the road that links Charlottes Pass village with Jindabyne offers a farewell view before you sidle south-east for a short distance back into familiar snow gums. Ngargo camp-site nestles almost 500 metres southward, down on the Thredbo river-valley floor. After a tussle through moderate scrub down a steep spur, the Thredbo River is a welcome sight on a warm day. Dabble your feet or enjoy a dip in the river—you deserve it!

Stephen Curtin produces nature-adventure films and works as an outdoors and environmental educator. His preferred Zen-like existence is Telemark skiing although he recently did some rock dodging on Russia's active volcanoes. Previously he was an Assistant Editor for *WILD* for three years.

— THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES, CHAPTER IV_a —

NATURAL SELECTION;

OR THE SURVIVAL OF THE PERFECTLY EVOLVED.



Fig. 1: Scarpa Trek, circa 1985.



Fig. 2: Australia



Fig. 3: The highly evolved Trek Pro, circa 2005.



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...& MORE!



ADAPT & SURVIVE. In the mid eighties, Scarpa set a new standard for bushwalking boots with the Scarpa Trek. Comfortable, supportive and practically indestructible, each handmade Trek combined the highest-quality Italian construction with a design that was completely focused on the needs of Australian bushwalkers. **REVOLUTIONARY EVOLUTION.** Now—20 years later—it's time for a few changes. The new Trek Pro has been engineered from the ground up to take advantage of modern design techniques and materials—like incredibly grippy Vibram® Grinta soles, a hydrophobic one-piece leather upper, and completely redesigned inners & cushioning. The end result is a boot that's more rugged, more comfortable and more durably water resistant than ever before—a boot that's perfectly evolved to survive Australian conditions.



SCARPA®

These boots are made for walking

John Chapman surveys bushwalking boots

Wild Gear Survey: what they are and what they're not

The purpose of *Wild Gear Surveys* is to assist readers in purchasing specialist outdoors equipment of the quality and with the features most appropriate for their needs; and to save them time and money in the process.

The cost of 'objective' and meaningful testing is beyond the means not only of *Wild*, but of the Australian outdoors industry in general and we are not aware of such testing being regularly carried out by an outdoors magazine anywhere in the world. Similarly, given the number of products involved, field testing is beyond the means of Australia's outdoors industry. *Wild Gear Surveys* summarise information, collate and present it in a convenient and readily comparable form, with guidelines and advice to assist in the process of wise equipment selection.

Surveyors are selected for their knowledge of the subject and their impartiality. Surveys are checked and verified by an independent referee, and reviewed by *Wild's* editorial staff. Surveys are based on the items' availability and specifications at the time of the relevant issue's production; ranges and specifications may change later. Before publication each manufacturer/distributor is sent a summary of the surveyor's findings regarding the specifications of their products for verification.

Some aspects of surveys, such as the assessment of value and features—and especially the inclusion/exclusion of certain products—entail a degree of subjective judgement on the part of the surveyor, the referee and *Wild*, space being a key consideration.

'Value' is based primarily upon price relative to features and quality. A product with more elaborate or specialised features may be rated more highly by someone whose main concern is not price.

An important criterion for inclusion is 'wide availability'. To qualify, a product must usually be stocked by a number of specialist outdoors shops in the central business districts of the major Australian cities. With the recent proliferation of brands and models, and the constant ebb and flow of their availability, 'wide availability' is becoming an increasingly difficult concept to pin down.

Despite these efforts to achieve accuracy, impartiality, comprehensiveness and usefulness, no survey is perfect. Apart from the obvious human elements that may affect assessment, the quality, materials and specifications of any product may vary markedly from batch to batch and even from sample to sample. It is ultimately the responsibility of readers to determine what is best for their particular circumstances and for the use they have in mind for gear reviewed.

LOOKING AT THE COLLECTION OF OLD BOOTS in my garage I realised that over the years I have used many models. I have boots for day-trips and boots for extended walks at present and no single boot has ever been perfect. Boot choice is very subjective; when they work well you won't even notice that you're wearing them. However, the pain of unsuitable boots can dominate a trip and even prompt an early finish. Years of walking in poorly fitting boots can also take a long-term toll on feet, limiting future walks.

Choosing the boot that is most comfortable for you generally begins with the style or boot that is traditionally best for your intended use, only varying if this does not work for you. There isn't a boot that is best for every body. One of my friends uses basketball boots on extended walks—not ideal and actually more expensive than buying long-lasting leather boots but this is the only comfortable boot for his very weirdly shaped feet.

A hidden but very important factor is the sole design. Most boots use multiple layers: the sole rubber provides friction and grip,

the shank in the middle of the sole provides the stiffness and the insole provides cushioning and shock absorption for the foot. There is no single design that is superior and, as long as the sole lives up to its job, sole design is unimportant to the average buyer. The rigidity of the sole, in combination with the ankle height, will determine how much support the boot gives. As a general rule the stiffer the sole the more supportive the boot.

This survey covers boots designed for bushwalking. It does not include runners, travel or 'approach' shoes. Brands were included on the basis that they were widely available. A maximum of three models from each supplier has been included—some manufacturers have many others as well.

A new concept for Wild: scratch-and-sniff photos! This photo taken at the end of a long, wet walk in the Tarkine, Tasmania. Glen Turvey



Suitable for

Heavier, stiffer boots are generally intended for rugged walking on 'extended' trips: walks longer than a weekend carrying a full pack. Boots for 'weekend' use are designed for overnight use and are the most popular style, being of medium weight and stiffness. These lighter boots made of more flexible materials allow a good fit to be easily achieved—many prefer to use these boots for everything from extended trips to day walks. Those labelled as 'day' are low-cut or lightweight, flexible boots for use on day-trips with good tracks that are generally dry.

Weight

The weight of one size-41 boot was either measured on an electronic scale or as supplied by the distributor.

Ankle height

Ankle support is determined by the height of a boot and the stiffness of the sole. When carrying heavy packs or crossing broken ground a higher ankle can provide more support, reducing fatigue and injuries. When carrying light packs or on day-trips the stress on ankles is reduced and many prefer the newer, lower designs.



The Rossi 920 Mawsons ham it up for the camera.

Sole rubber

Soft rubber provides more grip but wears more quickly while hard rubbers are more durable and provide more traction in mud. The majority of sole rubber is classed as medium, providing a good compromise between grip and wear.

Upper material

Trade names are used for many boot uppers. Despite the wide variety of names, most materials are similar and are either leather or synthetic. Boots with an upper that is more than 90 per cent leather are described as such; synthetics have an upper that is more than 90 per cent man-made; and combination is everything between these two extremes.

Bushwalking boots

	Suitable for	Weight, grams	Ankle height, centimeters	Sole rubber	Upper material	Flexibility	Water resistance	Durability	Value	Comments	Approx. price, \$
Aiku Italy/Romania www.aiku.it											
Pegaso Mid	D/W	580	11	M	C	M	●●	●●1/2	●●●	Gore-Tex lining	260
Era	W	555	13.5	M	C	M-H	●●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2	As above	280
Outback Pro	E	705	14	M	L	M	●●●1/2	●●●	●●●1/2	Gore-Tex lining; men's and women's models	350
Armond Italy www.armond.com											
Molvino	W	650	8	M	L	M	●●1/2	●●●	●●●		290
Morbegno	E	650	11.5	M	L	M	●●●	●●●1/2	●●●	Available in standard and wide fittings	290
Asolo Romania www.asolo.com											
Echo	W	650	13	M-H	C	M-H	●●1/2	●●●	●●1/2		240
Flash 80 GTX	E	655	12	M	C	M	●●●	●●●	●●●	Gore-Tex lining	300
Brenta	E	750	14	M	L	M	●●●	●●●1/2	●●●		340
Columbia China www.columbia.com.au											
Razor Ridge	W	600	10	M	C	H	●●	●●	●●●		130
Omnitorial	D	390	8	S	C	L	●1/2	●●	●●		260
Panther Ridge	D/W	620	10	S	C	M	●●	●●	●●	Women's fit	320
Garment China/Romania www.garment.com											
Passo	D/W	530	10	M	L	M	●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2		225
Flash XCR	D/W	500	10	S	C	L	●●	●●1/2	●●●	Gore-Tex lining	240
Dakota	W/E	875	13	H	L	L	●●●1/2	●●●1/2	●●●		440
Gri Sport Italy www.grisport.co.uk											
Hiking Boot 10503	D/W	590	11	M	L	H	●●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2		170
Espresso York	W	630	14.5	S	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●●		200
Hiking Boot 887	W	740	13	S-M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●●		200
Hi-Tec Vietnam www.hi-tec.com											
Pioneer	D	620	11	M	C	H	●●	●1/2	●●1/2		160
Crest	D	550	13	M	C	M	●●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2	Tecproof lining	200
Crest Lite	W	470	12	S	C	H	●●1/2	●●	●●1/2	As above	200
Kathmandu Italy/Romania www.kathmandu.com.au											
Houndsway Sympatex	D/W	660	11	M	C	H	●1/2	●●	●●●	Waterproof lining	300
Randonnee Proof	W/E	700	13	H	L	M	●●●	●●●1/2	●●●	Waterproof lining; men's and women's fit	380
Trail	E	820	13	H	L	L	●●●	●●●1/2	●●1/2		420
Keen China www.keenfootwear.co.nz †											
Targhee Mid	W	530	11.5	H	C	M	●●1/2	●●1/2	●●1/2		240
La Sportiva Romania www.lasportiva.com											
Tundra	W	640	12.5	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●1/2	Gore-Tex lining	270
Storm	W/E	610	14	S-M	C	L-M	●●●	●●●	●●	As above	350
Tirol	E	690	14.5	M	L	M	●●●1/2	●●●	●●1/2	As above	380
Meindl Germany www.meindlboots.ru.com											
Island Pro MFS	E	880	18	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●1/2	Gore-Tex lining	450
Tofana MFS	E	900	17	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●1/2	Gore-Tex lining; wide fitting	495
Merrell China www.merrell.com											
Pulse 2 Mid	D/W	580	11	S	L	H	●●●	●●1/2	●●1/2	Waterproof lining	250
Switchback	W/E	820	12.5	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●●	As above	300
Montrail China www.montrail.com											
TRS Comp	D	500	8	M	C	H	●1/2	●●	●●1/2		200
Storm GTX	D/W	540	10	M	C	M	●●1/2	●●	●●1/2	Gore-Tex lining	250
Torre GTX	E	770	12.5	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●●	As above	300

Bushwalking boots continued

		Suitable for	Weight, grams	Ankle height, centimetres	Sole rubber	Upper material	Flexibility	Water resistance	Durability	Value	Comments	Approx price, \$
Mountain Designs China www.mountaindesigns.com												
Overland	E	770	15	H	L	L	●●●	●●●●	●●●/2			270
Kananga	W	550	13.5	H	C	M	●●●	●●●●	●●●		Gore-Tex lining	280
Razorback	E	770	15	H	L	L	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●		As above	330
Outdoor Expedition China www.raysoutdoors.com.au												
Alaska	D/W	670	12	M	L	L-M	●●/2	●●/2	●●/2		Thinsulate lining	150
AWA	D/W	680	12	M	L	M	●●●	●●/2	●●/2			170
Raichle China/Korea/Romania www.raichle.ch												
Scout GTX	D/W	680	12	H	C	M	●●/2	●●/2	●●/2		Gore-Tex lining	300
Mt Guide GTX	W	760	12.5	H	C	L	●●●	●●●	●●●		As above	330
Mt Trail GTX	E	800	15	H	L	L	●●●/2	●●●●	●●●		As above	440
Rossi Australia www.rossiiboots.com.au												
920 Mawson	W	600	12	M	L	H	●/2	●●	●●			130
290 Barron	D/W	680	12	M	L	L	●●/2	●●●	●●●			200
110 Rapor	E	700	14	M	L	M	●●●/2	●●●	●●●/2			250
Salomon China www.salomonssports.com												
Expert Mid	D/W	525	10.5	M	L	L-M	●●	●●	●●●			230
Pro Trek Ltr S	W/E	630	11	M	L	M	●●●	●●●	●●/2		Gore-Tex lining	280
Adventure Trek 7	W/E	690	14	M	L	M	●●●/2	●●●	●●		As above	340
Scarpa Italy www.scarpa.net												
Lite Trek GTX	W	740	13.5	M	C	L-M	●●●	●●●	●●/2		Gore-Tex lining	280
Trek Pro	E	790	13	M-H	L	M	●●●/2	●●●/2	●●●			300
SL	E	810	14	H	L	L	●●●/2	●●●/2	●●●			400
Teva China www.teva.com												
Zaiika 6741	W	650	12	M-H	C	M	●/2	●●	●●		Men's and women's fit	260
Zamberian Italy www.zamberian.com												
Cuenca GTX	W	590	11	S-M	L	H	●●●	●●/2	●●●		Gore-Tex lining	270
New Fell Lite	E	670	11	M	L	M	●●●	●●●/2	●●●/2			300
Trek Lite	E	690	12	M	L	L	●●●	●●●/2	●●●			350

● poor ●● average ●●● good ●●●● excellent Suitable for: Day walking, Extended walking, Weekend walking Weight: for one size 41 boot Ankle height: maximum height above top of sole for one size 41 boot Sole rubber: Hard, Medium, Soft Upper material: Combination, Leather Flexibility: High, Medium, Low † not seen by surveyor ‡ not seen by referee The country listed after the manufacturer/brand name is the country in which the products are made

Leather is usually preferred for rough walking as it is very durable, water resistant and breathable, making it less sweaty than synthetics. Full-grain leather is more durable and waterproof than suede. Synthetics are becoming very popular and are commonly used in combination with some leather. This results in boots that are generally lighter than similar leather boots but there are usually also more seams, providing more potential water-entry points. They are also often less durable than leather boots as the stitching tends to wear out before materials.

Flexibility

Stiffer boots are rated as low, with soft soles rated as high. Ideally the rougher or stonier the walking conditions, the lower the flexibility should be. Boots with high flexibility are intended for well-made tracks, of which there are not many in Australia.

Scarpa SL boots are a heavy-duty, full-grain-leather boot.



Water resistance

No boot is really waterproof as most water will enter through the large hole in the top—not a surprise for experienced walkers. This rating is based on the speed at which water will seep through the sides of the boot, assuming gaiters or overpants are being used to keep water out. The number of seams, outer- and inner materials and tongue design affect this rating. From my experience, the most waterproof boots have one-piece, leather uppers with a waterproof lining. These boots can also be the warmest: in hot conditions this is a disadvantage. All boots require the application of waterproofing treatments. The rating is subjective as there is no easily repeatable test for water resistance.

Buy right

- **Intended use:** choose boots for your most common type of walk. Solid leather boots are best for extended walking trips while at the other extreme, lightweight boots are ideal for day walks. One model cannot be ideal for all purposes so consider buying more than one type if you have varied usage.
- **Fit:** the best advice anyone can give is to get the most comfortable boots. Feet are varied and manufacturers use a wide variety of lasts and designs to cater for this. Do not expect all models of the same brand to fit the same shaped foot as variety between different models is deliberate and normal.
- **Get the right length:** ensure that there is some space in front of your longest toes. If you are between sizes the usual advice is go for the larger one as feet swell and spread on extended walking trips.
- **Find the best width:** there is a huge variation in foot width. Find a width that's firm but comfortable and avoid boots with too tight a fit.
- **Heel fit:** Achilles' tendon problems are rare but can be major problems. Ensure your heel fits snugly and is held in well—it should not slide up and down when walking; there shouldn't be excessive pressure in any one place.

Durability

Most boots are very durable and will survive several years of service. Heavier boots are made with stronger, thicker materials and generally last longest. Boots with solid one-piece uppers, little stitching and few joints received higher ratings. Softer rubber soles will wear more quickly although boots may be able to be resoled. The rating is subjective as boots cannot be tested to destruction.

Value

Subjective comparison of quality and features in relation to cost. For



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- Waterproof and breathable
- Gore-Tex® lining

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Men's available in brown colour



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- Light hiking, casual wear
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those who only use boots occasionally the cheaper boots may provide better value than the table indicates. Regular users will find durability and general features more important than price—the price is soon forgotten on a long trip.

Price

Prices shown are based on normal retail prices in shops. Prices can be considerably cheaper if buying at sales or through 'frequent buyer' or 'loyal customer' schemes.



The La Sportiva Tibet has a Gore-Tex lining for increased water resistance.


Other brands available

Some of these boots are available from less traditional shops such as camping or disposal shops and department stores.

Brand	Distributor	Contact
Blundstone	Blundstone	(03) 6271 2222
Dolomite	www.dolomiteusa.com	
Lowa	Reflex Sports	(02) 4872 1242
Three Peaks	Three Peaks	(03) 9416 9000

Comments

Many of the more expensive boots use a waterproof layer in their design, generally Gore-Tex. While this layer seems excellent in principle, there are both positive and negative aspects to waterproof liners. The liner has to be stitched in and seam-sealing is more difficult than it is in clothing. This layer also tends to hold water in and generally these boots are hotter in warm climates.

Boots that are available in both men's and women's fit come in two models made on significantly different foot shapes—men's fit is usually broader than women's. Some people will be lucky with their foot size in both ranges—buy the one that fits best, not the one with your gender on the label. 

Bushwalking writer John Chapman has been contributing to *Wild* since issue one. His favourite place is Tasmania although he regularly visits all other Australian States.

This survey was refereed by Chris Baile.

4 WAYS TO FIND YOUR WAY BACK HOME

- 1** Take a big bag of white stones (they will shine in the moonlight). Drop stones on your route so that you can follow them later when you want to go back. Don't use white bread, the birds will eat it.



2

- Take a very long rope. Tie one end to your waist and the other to the door of your home.



3



Walk straight to your destination. Take equally long steps with both feet. When you want to get back home, just turn 180 degrees and walk straight back.

4

- Take a Suunto X9 and mark your home position. When you want to go back, just press "Find home".



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Suunto X9 is the smallest instrument in the world to offer complete **GPS** features. In addition, Suunto X9 also includes **ELECTRONIC COMPASS, ALTIMETER, BAROMETER, THERMOMETER** and **PC SOFTWARE** for planning or analysing your hikes. So put in your waypoints, go out and enjoy, but do come back.



SUUNTO
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GPS receivers

John Poppins tests ten models

Wild Gear Surveys: what they are and what they're not

(See box on page 59)

A GOOD GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) is now very affordable, with entry-level prices down to around those of a pair of reasonable boots. It is a tool that a prudent leader or researcher should consider carefully.

This survey is limited to a selection of GPS units suitable for bushwalking. Many other models are available: major manufacturers offer several 'families', with a range of models in each. Before buying a GPS check the latest models, features and pricing on the Internet and download user manuals of short-listed models for closer study. Read the manual carefully before using your GPS. Further models, information and tips for use can be found in the GPS survey in *Wild* no 88.

GPS models are now very similar in accuracy: in reasonably open conditions you should be given a position within 15 metres, most of the time within ten. All GPS units in the survey were tested to 'warm start' and took less than one minute to establish their position when not used for two hours. All new units

now on the market process signals from 12 to 14 satellites simultaneously, providing high performance and accuracy, although in practice they will rarely find more than nine satellites visible at a time. GPS units are also reasonably quick to respond to changes in direction and provide stable displays of walking speed. The significant differences between units are their features, and their ability to keep working accurately under foliage, particularly heavy, wet forest. Further information about technical terms can be found in the footnotes of the survey table.

Size does matter! In difficult conditions the larger units can generally hold signals better than more compact units. The medium and compact units are nevertheless excellent performers. The really small, wrist-watch GPS models have significantly improved over the past two years but are still more affected by obstacles such as trees and foliage. Newly released models use less power than older designs.

One factor commonly overlooked by novice GPS users is the datum used by maps and GPS units.

However, to avoid errors of up to 200 metres, care should be taken to ensure that these match. See 'Tips for use' for further information.

**Buy right**

- Consider your needs and budget. For extended alpine walks battery life and weight are significant factors. For heavy use or work purposes it is hard to choose between the larger units—each has different benefits and none has everything that might be wished for. As an emergency device the basic, compact devices and the lower-cost models of the larger units are attractive.
- Research available products and prices on the Internet. Check for deals that include options at little extra cost. The electronic and digital adventurer should consider choosing equipment that limits the variety of spare batteries (and memory cards) needed.
- Any older GPS models that process less than five satellites simultaneously will not perform well under trees—something to keep in mind if considering a second-hand GPS.
- All models in the survey have adequate datums for use in Australia. However, if you are planning on using the unit overseas it may be worth checking whether the GPS has datums for your intended destination.
- Further general information about GPS units can be found at <http://gpsinformation.net>.

Above, the Magellan eXplorist 600 with map display. **Below**, if they'd taken a GPS this caption could pinpoint their location! Tyndall Range, west coast of Tasmania. Roger Parkyn



GPS receivers for bushwalking

	Garmin www.garmin.com			Lowrance www.Lowrance.com/outdoor	Magellan www.magellangps.com			Silva www.silva.se	Suunto www.suunto.com	Uniden www.uniden.com.au
Model	Foretrex 101	Geko 301	GPS 60	IFINDER	Explorer 200	Explorer 600	Meridian Gold	Multi-Navigator	X9	GPS 205
RRP, \$	300	490	400	300	400	975	650	795	1480	370
Weight, grams	78	96	198	219	158	150	227	254	76 (plus dock)	200
Size, millimetres	83 x 44 x 23	99 x 49 x 25	155 x 61 x 33	142 x 65 x 25	117 x 53 x 33	117 x 53 x 33	165 x 74 x 31	170 x 61 x 30	Large wrist-watch & band	UHF hand-held CB radio
Display, millimetres/pixels	37 x 23/ 100 x 64	23 x 37/ 64 x 100	38 x 56/ 160 x 240	41 x 56/ 120 x 160	36 x 46/ 122 x 160	Colour; 36 x 46/na	44 x 56/ 160 x 120	Character display; 43 x 61	Large digital watch face	
Batteries	2 x AAA	2 x AAA	2 x AA	2 x AA	2 x AA	Proprietary Li-ion	2 x AA	2 x AA	Li-ion; built in	4 x AAA
Battery life	Up to 15 hrs typical use	Up to 9 hrs typical use	Up to 28 hrs (saver mode)	Up to 12 hrs continuous	Up to 14 hrs continuous	Up to 14 hrs continuous	Up to 14 hrs continuous	Up to 10 hrs continuous, 100 hrs compass	Up to 4-5 hrs GPS usage, 2 months without GPS	Up to 7 hrs typical use
Hot start, seconds	<15	<15	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<15	<15
Satellite display	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Advanced	Perspective	Perspective	Advanced	Number	Bar graph	Shows 'searching' only
Waypoints	500, 6 characters	500, 6 characters	500, 12 characters	1000, 20 characters	500, 8 characters	Unlimited, 20 characters	500, 8 characters	1000, 8 characters	500, 10 characters	500, 10 characters
Comments	No	No	Yes; date & time automatic	No	30 characters	30 characters	30 characters	No	No	No
Routes	20, each up to 125 points	20, each up to 125 points	20, each up to 250 points	99, each up to 99 points	20, each up to 30 points	Unlimited	20 with 30 legs	10 with 100 legs	50 with 49 legs	No
Tracks	10 with a total of 10 000 points	10 with a total of 10 000 points	20 with a total of 10 000 points	10 with a total of 10 000 points	5 with a total of 10 000 points	Unlimited	1 with 2000 points	1 with 5000 points	25 with a total of 8000 points	No
Map database	No	No	No	SD card, USA only	Main roads & cities; 8 M8	Main roads & cities; 8 M8	Main roads & cities; 16 M8	No	No	No
Remember go to	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Accuracy enhance	DGPS, WAAS	DGPS, WAAS	Averaging, DGPS, WAAS	DGPS, WAAS	WAAS	WAAS	Averaging, DGPS, WAAS	DGPS	No	No
Map overboard	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Est position error	Yes, satellite display	Yes, satellite display	Yes, satellite display	Yes, satellite display	Yes, position display	Yes, position display	Yes, customisable	No	Yes, function/mark display	No
Alarms	No	No	An, Ar, DW, O, P	An, Ar, O	Ar, O	An, Ar, Fix, O, P	An, Ar, Fix, O	Flashing message for GPS fix	O, P, T, W	B, C
Compass	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Barometric altimeter/accuracy, ± metres	No	Yes/1	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes/3	Yes	No
Sundry features	Ti, TC	Ga	Al, Calc, Cal, Ga, Geo	Ad, NW		Ar, Geo, P	Fl, WPT	Ar	Al, S, Th, Wh	UHF
Software upgrade	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No external connector	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Display

Most GPS units now provide some pictorial displays to show your track, routes, waypoints and other stored points of interest, as well as the satellite display. Some models use only numbers for showing positions, directions and satellite-signal strength. This may be a deliberate choice, as for the Silva model where the display is claimed to keep working at lower temperatures. In general, the larger the GPS display, the easier it is to read, especially when viewing maps. Colour displays are more useful for viewing complex mapping data but are more expensive.

Batteries

Carry spares! Most GPS units use alkaline batteries as they have the longest life. Nickel-metal-hydrate rechargeable batteries don't last as long but are reliable and cheaper to

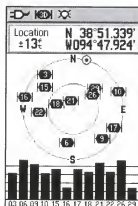
use if trips are frequent but short. Lithium batteries are light and work better in extreme cold. Some units now use proprietary Lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries—these perform well but replacement batteries are more difficult to find so consider buying spares.

AAA batteries (used in some of the smaller units) usually cost about 20 per cent more than AAs, which hold two to three times the electricity. The new, more efficient electronics reduce power consumption to compensate for the smaller batteries. The table provides some interesting 'operating current' figures for the units tested.

Carry fresh batteries and remove the batteries when storing the instrument. (Stored

waypoints, routes and tracks will not be lost.) Power switches should be hard to push and surrounded by a raised lip to prevent accidental activation. The 'electronic' bushwalker may want a GPS and digital camera that can share the same batteries and memory cards. Small, solar-panel chargers are available and worth considering.

An advanced satellite display shows the positions and numbers of satellites, as well as the signal strength. This one is from a Garmin GPS 60.



GPS receivers for bushwalking continued

	Garmin www.garmin.com			Lowrance www.lowrance.com/outdoor	Magellan www.magellangps.com		Silva www.silva.se	Suunto www.suunto.com	Udinger www.udinger.com.au	
Model	Foretrex 101	Geko 301	GPS 60	iFINDER	Explorer 200	Explorer 600	Meridian Gold	Multi-Navigator	X9	GPS 205
Accessories	Manual, Velcro wrist strap	Manual	Belt clip, data cable (USB), lanyard, manual, Trip & Waypoint Manager software	Aquapak waterproof case, lanyard, manual	Manual	Data cable (USB), manual	Data cable (RS232), manual	Batteries, car mount, carry case, cig lighter cable, instructional CD, lanyard, manual	Charger, data cable (RS232), docking station, manual, software CD	Belt clip, manual
Options	Data (RS232) \$25	Carry \$30 Cig \$20 Mount \$76 Pwr \$60	Carry \$31 Cig \$20 Mount \$67 Pwr \$35	Cig \$79 SD \$55	Belt \$34 Mount \$88	Belt \$34 Cig \$79 Mount \$88 SD \$55 spare battery not available	Carry \$29 Cig \$63 SD \$55 SD (128 MB) \$20	Data (RS232) \$109 Global Map Planner \$248 Pwr \$134	Data (USB) \$149 Cig \$38	
Software	Trip & Waypoint Manager \$64	Trip & Waypoint Manager \$64	Trip & Waypoint Manager including City Navigator \$39	Marine charts—eg Cairns—Apollo Bay \$390	Discover Australia \$249 Great Desert Tracks \$275	Discover Australia \$249 Great Desert Tracks \$275	Global Map Planner included	Suunto Trek Manager included		
Temperatures, °C	-15-70	-15-70	-15-70	na	-10-60	-15-70	-10-60	-25-70	-20-60	na
External power, volts	No	12	9-35	12	No	12	9-16	6-28	No	No
Power saver	Demo, saver, tracking off	Demo, saver, tracking off	Demo, saver, tracking off	Adjustable saver, demo, tracking off	Demo (no power saved)	Demo (no power saved)	Demo (no power saved)	Tracking off	Tracking off	Tracking off
Battery current, ma	004/58/32	004/58/32	004/99/40	04/120/48	107/98/98	Not tested	13/150/50	38/220/ saver not tested	Not tested	03/84-119/120-190
Backlight, ma	22	22	133/180	50	9/22	Not tested	60/90	140	Not tested	Not tested
Compass on, ma	na	38	na	na	na	Not tested	na	Not tested	Not tested	Transmit 200/300
Interfaces	RS232	RS232	Ext antenna, RS232, USB	Ext antenna, SD card	None	SD card, USB	RS232, SD card	RS232	RS232	No

Footnotes are in the order the items appear in the table. **Battery life:** varies widely, depending upon method of use. From supplier's specifications. **Hot start:** time to establish position after being turned off for one to two minutes. **Tested** Satellite display: information on the number, position and signal strength of visible satellites. **Waypoints:** landmarks, destinations, turning-points, or features to be avoided are all stored in the unit with names. A few can store additional information as **Comments** (eg time and date, or a phone number). **Routes:** an ordered group of waypoints making up a route, which can be activated for travel forward or back. **Trace:** a bread crumb trace of the user's route, for the plotter display, for retracing forward or back. **Map databases:** memory for storage of maps. It may be built in and/or removable Secure Digital memory cards. **Remember go far:** does the unit remember the last go to point when turned off then on again (saves time and battery power)? **Accuracy enhancers:** does the unit support methods of improving accuracy to within five metres? **WAAS** is used in the USA and Europe. **DGPS** requires additional radio signal receiver. When stationary some GPS can be held to for auto-averaging; average positions further to reduce errors. **Man overboard:** a last method of saving and using a point to be returned to immediately. **Estimated position error (EPE):** a computed geometric error depending on the number and positions of the satellites being tracked. Additional errors can result from other causes, such as atmospheric conditions and reflections, so this figure should be treated as optimistic. **Alarms:** some units allow the setting of alarms warning of arrival at destination, proximity to a turning-point, danger or deviation too far off course (Cross Track Error or XTE). Alarms may be displayed and/or audible. Audible alarms attract attention. Anchor, Arrival, Black spots, Camera (speed and red light) DW (depth/hollow water), Fix GPS fix, Off-course, Proximity. **Compass:** an inbuilt electronic magnetic compass. **Altimeter:** an inbuilt barometric altimeter, allowing more accurate monitoring of climbs and weather. A more accurate altitude may be used to improve position accuracy. **Sundry features:** Adjustable power saving, Alarm clock, Area within route, Calculator, Calendar, Flots, Games, Geocache manager, HW not waterproof, Perimeter, Stop watch, Thermometer, Timer, TC Trip Computer, UHF UHF citizen's band transceiver, WPT save waypoint to route, Wrist-watch. **Software upgrade:** Can the internal program be upgraded online? **Accessories:** supplied with the unit. **Options:** available at extra cost. **Adapter data adapter, Belt-clip carry case, Cig lighter cable, Data cable, Carry case, Mounting cradle, Pwr power and data cable, SD card (256 MB).** **Software:** some of the programs and mapping data available to use with the GPS and computer. **Temperatures:** operating temperature range. **External power:** voltage which can be supplied through an accessory power cable. **Power saver:** normally a position is calculated every second. Power can be saved by missing a few seconds between readings. The satellite tracking function can be turned off when standing still or under a roof. Demonstration mode is used by salespeople inside the shop. **Battery current:** measured in milliamperes. GPS off/GPS on normally/satellite tracking off. **Backlight:** additional current drawn, low/high intensity. **Compass:** additional current (if controllable). **Interfaces:** external connections (if any). A few units provide for a cable connection to an external antenna. Most provide for connection to a computer, using either the COM port with an RS232 Serial cable, or the faster and more convenient USB cable. **na** not available.

Satellite display

When conditions are difficult you will want as much information as possible about the positions of the satellites and the quality of your GPS's calculations: this is where the satellite display comes into its own. 'Advanced' satellite displays use concentric circles to show the positions (and numbers) of the satellites in range, as well as bars that indicate the strength of each satellite's signal. If you are finding it difficult to get a satisfactory reading on your GPS, a display of this type can help you to get better reception and a

more accurate position. The display may also show whether the GPS is calculating only horizontal position (2D) or also height (3D), which needs more than three good satellite signals. The 'estimated position error' (EPE) is also useful; this is lower if a lot of satellites are visible and well distributed around the sky. Without this, it is sometimes frustratingly hard to decide whether the GPS is operating accurately.

An oblique perspective view of satellites is not as helpful and a simple bar graph or a display that uses text to tell you the number of satellites is least helpful.

Map database

GPS units that can display a map database have large internal memories and/or provide slots for postage-stamp-sized Secure Digital (SD) memory cards. This memory allows them to store very detailed maps. Some map detail may be already loaded when the unit is purchased (usually major highways and arterial roads). More software can be purchased on CD. These map databases are very cheap when compared to the cost of all the paper maps and directories they represent. As memory is now so cheap (one gigabyte SD cards cost as little as \$125), it is possible to store detailed mapping for whole States within the GPS. However, paper maps provide a better overview for preliminary outline planning.

Some mapping software enables paper maps to be scanned and then 'geo-referenced' so that waypoints can be loaded,

The Silva Multi-Navigator.



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and 243 MHz international distress frequencies simultaneously. The new optional strobe light can be seen at night for distances of more than four kilometres. It is buoyant, and waterproof to a depth greater than three metres. Unlike other units, the batteries are fully replaceable. This is not a throw-away. KTI mini sat-alert is designed to the personal EPIRB requirements of AS/NZS 4330:2000 with approvals from the Australian Communications Authority and approved by CASA to the portable E.L.T. requirements of CAR252A.



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trips planned and routes plotted. This provides a versatile tool but lacks the searching capability of a true map database.

Electronic compass and barometric altimeter

An electronic barometric altimeter is valuable as it indicates approaching weather patterns. If recalibrated several times a day it can also improve the accuracy of height measurement. Electronic compasses must be recalibrated every time the batteries are changed or there may be errors of up to 20 degrees. I am more comfortable using an orienteering compass as it doesn't need batteries or calibration.

Other considerations

Just as many mobile phones now include cameras and email capability, innovative combinations are being explored by GPS manufacturers. Uniden has married the GPS with a small, hand-held citizen's band radio—the units transmit locations as well as any conversation. Some GPS units can use Bluetooth to talk to pocket computers, much as some mobile phones can talk to other nearby devices.

GPS units with upright antennae can be easily viewed when sitting vertically on the car dashboard. If a unit **remembers 'go to'** points, it saves time, button presses and battery power at each restart.

It is worth remembering that however good your GPS unit, it is not fail-safe. In some situations the position information can have big errors, or your unit can even fail to calculate a position! Carry adequate maps and an orienteering compass just in case.

Garmin

Garmin offers a large range of units in several families, all of which have excellent satellite displays. In all models the satellite tracking function can be turned off to save power. Garmin's new 'City Navigator—Australia Version 6' CD provides excellent road mapping down to minor road level. You can test it at www.garmin.com/cartography

The Garmin **GPS 60**, **GPS 72** and **GPS 76** (the last two are not in the survey) are the biggest units in their range, with easy-to-read displays and good readings under heavy forest. The GPS 60 has an upright antenna.

The compact eTrex family (not in survey) use cheaper, widely available AA batteries and are very reasonably priced, with entry-level units beginning at around \$270. Under heavy forest they keep a fix well. The most basic eTrex provides adequate GPS features and can be connected to a computer for data transfer and software upgrades.

The small, light **Foretrex** and **Geko** range use new technology that enables reasonable battery life with AAA batteries and they maintain a fix reasonably well under heavy forest. The budget Geko 101 (around \$240) provides only 18 datums but includes those necessary for Australia. The Geko 201 is more expensive but includes the full range



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Brian Hughes on the summit of Mt. Orleigh looking across to Mt. Nelson West along the Overland Track

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of datums and can be connected to a computer. The Foretrex are technically very similar but are designed to be worn on the wrist.

Lowrance

Lowrance GPS models use SD cards both for communication with computers and to store mapping databases. Unfortunately, Australian data are only available for marine use at present.

Tips for use

- Heavy tree cover—especially when the foliage is wet—can block satellite signals. If you try to start your GPS deep in the forest it may be unable to pick up sufficient signals to fix a location. Plan ahead: start the GPS in open terrain a few minutes before moving into the forest and allow the GPS time to refine its position. Once it has an accurate position the unit should 'hang in' with the scraps of data that penetrate the forest canopy. If conditions are still a challenge, reduce speed or make short stops to allow more chance of regaining a 'fix'. Use the satellite display to help you to find a different spot from which sufficient satellites can be tracked.

- When simple maps are drawn using only latitude and longitude, areas far from the equator are not shown accurately: things appear 'fattened' and distances cannot be measured accurately. To fix this and allow accurate measurements to be made the 'Universal Transverse Mercator' (UTM) projection is used to draw maps. Detailed maps show a one kilometre grid from which positions can be measured. New Australian maps draw this grid from a datum (reference point) known as Map Grid Australia (MGA94) or Geocentric Datum Australia (GDA94). (Datums are inconsistently named but the date numerals remain the same.) This datum is effectively the same as the international WGS84 datum, the default for all GPS units. However, most of the detailed Australian maps still on the market use UTM with a kilometre grid based on the old Australian Geodetic Datum (AGD66). Local datums are drawn upon within the national grid system. It is also important to recognise in which zone you are using your GPS. Victoria, for example, has two zones: 54 and 55. See www.ga.gov.au/geodesy/ or www.cism.gov.au/cism/gda/index.html for more information regarding specific datum and zones for use in your area of Australia.

The Lowrance **iFinder** is available through marine dealers. It has an excellent satellite display, is particularly fast to 'hot start' and remembers the last used 'go to' point. Waypoint names can be up to 20 characters—quite descriptive.

Magellan

For the outdoors adventure user Magellan's mapping database is a major strength. The Magellan 'Discover Australia' and 'Great Desert Tracks' CDs show roads, tracks, rivers, creeks, gullies, parklands and points of interest at a detail comparable to a 1:25 000 map sheet. The new version of 'Discover Australia' also includes contours. Detailed mapping for several States can be loaded into Magellan's map-capable GPS units—mouth-watering stuff for the bushwalker. Maps with this level of detail are best viewed on the largest possible display. All Magellan GPS units allow comments of up to 30 characters for each waypoint saved. You cannot turn off the satellite tracking function.

The large **Meridian Gold** has an upright antenna, an excellent satellite display and very good tenacity under forest. When a waypoint is saved it can be immediately added to a route, minimising button pressing.

Models in the extensive new **Explorer** range are lighter, more compact and use less power. It is strange that they have only the less useful, oblique pictorial display and you



The very small, wrist-watch style Suunto X9.

can't easily save waypoints to routes. The Explorer 100 is the entry-point into the range at around \$250, while the **200** has an eight-megabyte map memory. The 400, 500 and **600** models can use computer connections or SD cards and come with a proprietary Li-ion battery and mains charger. At the time of the survey spare Li-ion batteries are not available although a battery pack allowing AAA batteries to be used is under development.

Silva

It is claimed that the Silva **Multi-Navigator** is operational at lower temperatures as it uses a special character display rather than a plotted map. The unit has a sensitive electronic compass and barometric altimeter, with a clever menu structure designed to allow the satellite tracking to be turned off

for long intervals when the less power-intensive electronic compass can be used. The last used 'go to' point is remembered. Silva's Global Map Planner software enables the scanning and then 'geo-referencing' of paper maps.

Suunto

The wrist-watch size Suunto **X9** unit has greatly lifted the capability of ultra-compact GPS units. It is able to cold start in a garden surrounded by modest trees and it has acceptable hot start times, although slower than bigger units. The satellite display is a single bar, making it hard to assess performance when loss of signals leads to momentary freezing of position read-out and erratic display of speed. It is best suited for use in relatively open country, where it gives positions as accurately as larger GPS units. However, satellite signals are lost under heavy forest. The docking station and a nine-volt battery must be carried for recharging on extended trips. The Suunto Trek Manager software enables you to scan and then 'geo-reference' paper maps.

Although the Suunto appeared to provide a setting for the AGD66 datum it did not respond to this setting. This leads to an apparent error in position of about 220 metres when working with many existing Australian maps. The user can add or subtract corrections but there is a risk of errors being made.

Uniden

When two or more **GPS 205** UHF citizen's-band radio transceivers are used, each is given a 'name'. Each user can broadcast their GPS position to all others within range (a few kilometres in flat country, much less if in gullies). The units can then guide users to each other. Although my first thought was that the battery life would be very short when using the CB transmitter, it took only a second to transmit a position when tested, meaning economical use is possible. The units are aimed at the automotive market, designed to warn users of known traffic cameras and accident black spots. The speed display tends to fluctuate erratically at walking pace.

These units display position only in the form of latitude and longitude (in degrees) measured from the international datum WGS84. This makes it difficult to work accurately with detailed UTM maps and with any datum other than WGS84. It is to be hoped that the next generation of Uniden GPS will provide a choice of UTM, important datums, and add a helpful satellite display; they will then be more interesting for outdoors navigation. ●

John Pappas is an engineer who supplied computer programming systems to aerospace, automotive and toolmaking companies. He is now more concerned by our catchments, forests, Landcare, WaterWatch and ethical shareholders' groups. As a volunteer he manages a mapping system and database used by Victorian ENGOS. He uses a GPS to confirm his position on 'bushwalks' around logging coupes.

This survey was refereed by Nick Byrne.

A brown and yellow Teva sneaker is shown in mid-air, splashing through water. The shoe features a mesh upper, leather overlays, and a rugged sole. The Teva logo is visible on the side and tongue. The background is a dark, textured surface with water droplets and splashes.

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Everything but the kitchen sink...

The range of accessories, recipes and cookware now available means that dodgy camping food should be a thing of the past. The only excuse left is laziness—shame it's such a good one, suitable for all occasions! It's pretty easy to guess what is special about **Orikaso's** new **Fold Flat range**—the **cup, dish** and **bowl** all live up to their name, eliminating

like freshly ground coffee in the morning...It is made from Lexan, has a handle that can be folded flat for packing and an adjustable, ceramic grinder. RRP \$48.95. GSI products are distributed by **Spelean**; phone 1800 634 853.

There are a couple of new products for cooking, too. The **Optimus Terra** is an aluminium **cook set** consisting of



the struggle of trying to shove bulky dishes into an already bulging pack. The range is claimed to be non-stick and unbreakable, with the dish, the heaviest item in the range, weighing only 42 grams. Not only can you eat out of it, but with a bit of crafty folding it can be used as a strainer and coffee filter as well. The entertainment value for origami enthusiasts can't be overlooked either. RRP \$39.95 for the **Picnic Set** which contains two dishes, two cups and a bowl. **Light My Fire's Outdoor Meal Kit** is aptly named. It is a compact two-plate/bowl/cup set which also includes a spork—a combined spoon and serrated fork. It consists of two plates, a spill-free cup, a small waterproof box and—wait for it—an integrated cutting board and colander! RRP \$39.95. These products are distributed by **Rucsac Supplies**; phone them on (02) 9546 8455 for further details.

GSI has also been going gadget crazy. Not only is there a spork, we now have the **Foon**—a fork/spoon hybrid made from Lexan with a 'quick-clip' handle so you never lose it. RRP \$3.95. The see-through **Fair Share mug's** calibrated measurements let you know if you're getting yours, and if not, who is! It holds up to 800 millilitres of liquid, is made from Lexan and has a threaded lid. It can be used for transporting food—it seems ideal for rehydrating meals on the move—or as a serving container. RRP \$17.95. The **Coffee Grinder** also needs little explanation. However, the **GSI** model is claimed to be light (198 grams) and compact, and there's really nothing

The Orikaso Fold Flat range is ideal for origami enthusiasts! Below, the GSI Coffee Grinder—gourmet indeed.



two pots and a fry-pan/lid that have been hard-anodised for durability, with non-stick coatings. The set comes in a close-fitting nylon and neoprene bag that is designed to keep the contents warm—it is claimed that boiling water left in -5°C for 30 minutes will still be a toasty 70°C. Maybe the food in your bowl doesn't have to be cold by the time you finish? RRP \$99.95. The **Optimus Crux** is a very small **gas burner** that still has a full-size burner head. It is claimed to weigh only 87 grams and pack down to 84 x 57 x 31 millimetres—the pot supports fold up and the whole head folds to the side. RRP \$199.95. Both products are distributed by **Rucsac Supplies**.

PACKS in all shapes and sizes

Also keen on the catchy names, the **One Planet WBA** (Weights Bugger All!) rucksack tips its hat at the light-weight revolution. It is said to use more durable fabrics than ultra-light packs—six-ounce canvas and 500-denier nylon, with a layer of each on the base—and weighs two kilograms (for the medium back-length, 60 litre model) while maintaining durability and waterproofness. It uses the One Planet Exact Fit harness and is available in four sizes. Phone **Adventure One** on (03) 9311 5244 for further information. RRP \$299.

The **Vango Pumi 2** is designed for people who are 'extremely demanding on their gear' and, you guessed it, is not part of the ultra-light brigade. However, this range of large-capacity (65–80 litres) expedition packs has a harness that is said to be stable and comfortable. The packs have dual compartments and the usual features, including a map pocket, ice-axe attachment points and a rain cover. The 60+10 model weighs 2.45 kilograms and has an RRP of \$199. Phone **Anso** on (03) 9471 1500 for more information.



The Aqua Himal Dry Pack.

Black Wolf has a new range of watertight bags, including the **Aqua Himal Dry Pack**. It is made of heavy-duty, waterproof Ripstop nylon with taped seams, has a roll-top closure and looks pretty good. The back panel and hip-belt have some padding and the whole thing folds into the front pocket in a neat little bundle. Phone **Phoenix Leisure Group** on (02) 9667 0899. RRP \$99.95.

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Layer upon layer

Merino wool looks set to take over the world, or at least the base-layer market! As well as more traditional merino-wool **thermals**, **Wilderness Wear** has produced the **Duotherm range**, which uses polypropylene fibre on the inside and Australian merino wool on the outside. The high wicking ability of the polypro is said to keep you dry, while the wool keeps you warm. Tops in the range use flat seams and Raglan sleeves to eliminate rub; they are \$79.95 and \$71.95, respectively, for the long-sleeve and short-sleeve versions. Phone Wilderness Wear on (03) 9416 7211 for more details. **Weft** has also produced a range of merino-wool garments; see www.weft.co.nz or phone **Anso** for further details.

The evocatively named **Silkbody** has produced a new range of **Silk-Fleece mid-layer tops**. The two-layer garments are said to be warm and very lightweight and come with full zips, half zips or in a hoodie style in both men's and women's cuts. For further information, phone **Adventure Extreme** on (02) 4966 1377. RRP from \$239.

colour and dimensions to the amount of fill, creating a tailor-made bag. It's all done online at www.phdesigns.co.uk and the site is apparently easy for both novices and experts to use. Prices range from \$275 to \$2455 depending on your requirements, with the most expensive bags catering for those who want to winter in Siberia!

Alert and alarmed

The new Lock Alarm from Damaco seems ideal for securing outdoors gear. This alarm unit has a long, steel cable which can be looped around possessions and locked back



Pesky thieves be gone! Damaco's Lock Alarm would at least give them a fright.

trix

Bush laundry
A clever way to wash
dirty clothing on
multiday trips,
by Tony Maasackers

Carry a medium or large zip-lock plastic bag. (You may have a spare one that has been used to carry food.) Put a small amount of liquid concentrate washing detergent into the bag with your dirty clothing and about two cups of water. Seal the bag, then knead, tumble and agitate the bag and it's contents until the clothing is sufficiently clean. Repeat the process to rinse. Squeeze all the water out of the clothes and hang to dry. This efficient process is ideal as it can be done far away from watercourses and uses very little water. The bag can be rinsed, turned inside out, dried and used again.

Wild welcomes readers' contributions to this section; payment is at our standard rate. Send them to the address at the end of this department.

to itself. The 120-decibel alarm will then go off if the unit is tampered with, or if an attempt is made to cut the cable. Phone Damaco on 1300 780 307 for further details. RRP \$66 for the 2.4 metre cable, \$88 for the 4.6 metre cable.

Pacsafe has a new range of Travel Sentry locks that allow you to lock your baggage when travelling through the USA without worrying that the overzealous security people will have to damage your pack to get in. Travel Security Administration agents in the USA and the UK have codes and tools to open these locks, while you can use the normal key or combination methods. Visit Outdoor Survival's Web site at www.outdoorsurvival.com.au for further information. RRP from \$8.95 to \$16.95.

Spray-on sunscreen

Rounding out a bumper Equipment department, Kinneys is a spray-on sunscreen that doesn't require rubbing, or contain greasy oil or desiccating alcohol. This means that it's easy to apply and doesn't feel (or smell) as though you're coating yourself in metho. It has a 30+ SPF rating and uses a UVA blocker that is said to give you the same benefits as zinc, without turning your face weird colours. Phone Sea to Summit on 1800 787 677. RRP \$10-25. ☼

New and innovative products of relevance to the rucksack sports fan loan to *Wild* and/or information about them, including high-resolution digital photos (on CD, not by email) or colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send them to *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Vic 3181 or contact us by email: editorialadmin@wild.com.au

Knick-Knacks

A new kind of designer bag...

UK sleeping bag manufacturer Peter Hutchinson Designs has added a new line of bags—those that you design yourself. You can choose everything from the fabric,

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Illustrated: Chrysalis Softie Xpedition

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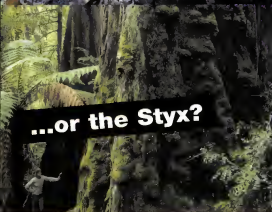
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In December 2004 Gunns Ltd (Australia's largest export woodchipper) sued The Wilderness Society, five of its staff, plus 14 other groups and individuals – now known as the Gunns 20 – for what it alleges are a series of wrongful acts. Gunns is claiming a total of \$6.4 million in damages from all claims – with over \$3.5m against The Wilderness Society and its officers. We will vigorously defend the claims against us.

This situation presents a huge threat, not only to Tasmania's forests and the future of The Wilderness Society, but also to our right to speak out for the protection of our natural world.

Every Australian who values fairness, choice and opportunity to protect their environment should be concerned. This unprecedented new threat will not stop our vital work across Australia, including our national campaign to protect Tasmania's forests.

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PROTECTING TASMANIA'S OLD-GROWTH FORESTS?

Eli Greig, Vica Bayley and others report on the Tasmanian forestry package



This area in the Tarkine is now protected from logging. However, these forests, like the rest of the Tarkine, have not been protected from mining. Rob Blakers

On 13 May the Tasmanian and Federal Governments announced their long-awaited package for Tasmania's forests, promised during the federal election last year. This Supplementary Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) is said to protect 193 000 hectares of forest from logging, which includes 89 per cent of the Tarkine wilderness in north-west Tasmania and about half of the Styx Valley, according to the *Age* on 20 May. The two governments have also pledged \$250 million to support communities and the logging industry as they move away from their reliance on old-growth forests, with both governments proudly envisaging the creation of more jobs through the agreement.

However, conservation and community groups are sceptical of the policy, claiming that except for the Styx and the Tarkine, forest protection is limited to smaller, scattered reserves that may never have been logged. Only 58 000 hectares of the protected area is in formal reserves, and not a single hectare of that in new National Parks. The rest is in 'informal reserves', much of this steep slopes unsuitable for logging or the leftovers from logging required by law such as

stream-side reserves. Many conservationists believe that the result is poor for Tasmania as a whole but fantastic for the Tarkine—a possible first step towards National Park listing and subsequent World Heritage nomination.

The policy will not stop old-growth logging in Tasmania: many forests in the north-east highlands, Blue Tier, Great Western Tiers and Ben Lomond remain under threat. Indeed, according to the Wilderness Society (TWS) the logging of a coupe on Crystal Hill in the Blue Tier, the scene of long-running community opposition, had begun by 1 June. Conservation groups are also concerned about the lack of funding for sustainable tourism initiatives and community development opportunities, and the lack of protection from mining offered in the package. Announcements of a big reduction in clear-fell and burn practices were treated with scepticism. The practice will be replaced with what Tasmanian Greens leader Peg Putt called 'clump clear-felling' in the *Age* on 20 May: a patchwork of trees will be cut down around islands of remaining vegetation. The Federal Government set aside more than \$2 million to



advertise its Tasmanian forestry package. The Greens combated this with a \$5000 campaign condemning the State and Federal Governments for abandoning old-growth forests, with Senator Bob Brown admitting to the *Launceston Examiner* on 23 May that they would be 'slightly outspent'.

The announcement of the Supplementary RFA coincided with further developments



The recent package also protects Philosophers Falls, a 'wilderness gem' in the north of the Tarkine, from logging. Eli Greig

Victorian Supreme Court rules against Gunns

Eli Greig reports

The judge in the multimillion-dollar 'Gunns 20' case has refused to accept the wood-chip giant's claims, and has required Gunns to try again to set out their case in a way that can be understood.

The original statement of claim was more than 200 pages. The day before the hearing to strike it out, Gunns served another statement of claim of 360 pages. The judge rejected the claims, saying that large parts of them were either unintelligible or understandable only after the most careful and painstaking analysis.

The judge described parts of the statement of claim as 'misconceived', 'embarrassing' and suffering from 'extreme prolixity', and suggested that 'the conceptual basis of the plaintiffs' case be subjected to serious reconsideration'.

The 20 groups and individuals named in the writ, which arises from the campaign to stop old-growth logging in Tasmania (see Green Pages in *Wild* no 96), were treating the judgement as an important first step towards success.

Gunns was given just four weeks to submit a 'radically rewritten' claim, with the Amended

in the plan to build a pulp mill in northern Tasmania (see Green Pages in *Wild* no 97). TWS has obtained documents showing that the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC), the body in charge of assessing the pulp mill proposal, is worried that its integrity may be compromised by the actions of the Tasmanian Government's Pulp Mill Task Force, which was formed to promote the concept of a pulp mill in the Tamar Valley. On top of this, on 9 May—the day when public comment on the proposal closed—logging giant Gunns released a revised project scope for the pulp mill. TWS reports that among the significant changes that weren't mentioned in the original project scope were: a huge expansion in the area of the site, from 200 hectares to 650; the construction of a new deep-water wharf; ruling out an environmentally preferable location in Hampshire as a site; dropping the option to make the mill chlorine free; and requiring pine and native-forest material for 30 years. There was considerable public outrage at the new scope of the proposal and the timing of its announcement, and the RPDC is considering reopening the period for public comment.

TWS claims that if the pulp mill is built as currently proposed thousands of hectares of native forest will be destroyed and environmental pollution problems for the Tamar Valley, Launceston communities and the Bass Strait marine environment will be significantly increased. For further information, visit www.tamartrac.com

Mitsubishi Paper Mills, a major international buyer of Tasmanian forest products, announced in late June that it would stop buying material from Tasmania's old-growth forests. Nippon Paper Group, another major purchaser of wood-chips, followed this by calling for public comment to help the company to formulate a basic policy on the purchasing of raw materials. Conservationists view this as a sign that the company is also reconsidering its use of wood-chips derived from Tasmanian old-growth forests.

Statement due by 15 August. Gunns put a brave face on this set-back and the serious criticisms levelled by Justice Bongiorno. Executive Chairman John Gay said that the company 'has no concerns with this procedural development' and vowed to continue the case 'against all defendants'.

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Development in Southwest National Park

Russell Warman reports that work has begun



In June bulldozers began work on a road into the Southwest National Park, Tasmania, which will provide access to a proposed 60-unit resort on the southern side of Recherche Bay, Cockle Creek East, near the start of the famous South Coast Track. (See Green Pages in *Wild* no 94.) The resort proposal is not the only threat to this outstanding heritage area: logging is proposed for the northern side of the bay.

Recherche Bay was visited by two significant French scientific expeditions in 1792 and 1793. Gardens were established, botanical specimens collected and much was learned of pre-European Tasmanian

Aboriginal heritage. The planning permit was granted in 2001 before the area's high historical value was fully known, with work beginning just before the permit was due to expire for lack of activity. The lease, covering about 60 hectares of the Southwest National Park, was also only signed a few weeks before the expiry date.

The area was supposed to be protected inside the National Park and by the World Heritage Area Management Plan, which specifically disallowed such a development in the area. However, the WHAMP was amended by the State Government to allow the resort to be built.

Top, the new roadworks inside Tasmania's Southwest National Park.

Russell Warman. Bottom, a resort is planned for Recherche Bay, southwest Tasmania. The bay is in the background, with Black Swan Lagoon in the foreground at the right. Bob Brown



Good news for Victoria and New South Wales

New National Parks and a cattle-free Alpine National Park

This June was a good time for Victoria's environment. Megan Clinton reports that on 10 June the Victorian Government released its final plans for the new and extended park in the Otways. The 102 000 hectare Great Otway National Park will include the existing Otway National Park and the Angahook-Lorne, Carlisle and Melba Gully State Parks, as well as a huge new area of reserves. It will stretch from Anglesea through to the tip of Cape Otway, making it Victoria's largest coastal National Park.

The new park will be broken into two categories: 60 000 hectares will be National Park, with the remaining 40 000 hectares designated as Forest Park, a new type of formal reserve that allows for recreational activities such as horse-riding and trail-bike riding. Logging will cease by 2008 when log and wood-chip licences expire; adjustment packages and licence buy-outs for sawmills have been offered by the State Government. The government has also committed \$20 million of extra funding for rangers, management and nature-based tourism infrastructure. It is expected that bushwalking opportunities will be greatly expanded in the new reserve.

This decision follows on from that to end cattle grazing in the Alpine National Park (see Editorial in this issue). The decision was backed up by years of scientific research and applauded by conservation groups nationwide. Eli Greig reports that following intense lobbying, Federal Environment Minister Ian Campbell issued an emergency heritage listing in a move apparently aimed to protect grazing. However, the Federal Government does not have the legal power to force Victoria to renew cattle-grazing licences, meaning the heritage listing should have little real effect.

Around 215 000 hectares of National Parks have been added to NSW across the State, including in the Brigalow and Nandewar woodlands and the Riverina. Legislation passed in June gives the Brigalow and Nandewar region—stretching from Dubbo in central NSW to the Queens-

land border and including the Pilliga, Gonnou, Terry Hie Hie and Bebo forests—155 000 hectares of new National Parks and 185 000 hectares of State conservation areas. Around seventy per cent of this area has been cleared during the last 200 years, with around 23 species of fauna already extinct and 58 other fauna species and 48 flora species in danger of extinction.

In June 60 000 hectares of National Parks were created in 14 areas, including Kalyarr National Park on the Lachlan River west of Hay. Five small additions north-east of Young are also said to be highly significant. However, according to the National Parks Association (NPA) there is still a long way to go as there still aren't

any significant reserves along the NSW side of the Murray River.

It isn't all good news for NSW. Plans to sell three million hectares of Crown land have worried conservationists including NPA's Andrew Cox. He says that although the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment Bill 2005 allows the plans to proceed, it does little to ensure that the environment of the properties is protected once they have been converted to freehold leases. The Minister for the Environment has a role in protecting the values of properties that are wilderness, abut or adjoin National Parks; however, other areas are not offered automatic protection although they may be close by and have the same conservation values.



The cattlemen rallied in Melbourne in June, protesting against the end of cattle-grazing in the Alpine National Park. Eli Greig

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Queensland developments

The recent budget held both good and bad news for the environment

The Queensland budget released in June was a 'mixed bag' according to TWS. The extra \$8.2 million for National Park management of Cape York over the next two years was welcomed as a good start and is a considerable improvement on previous funding of \$2.5 million a year. However, the increase is still said to be considerably less than that required. This follows the TWS commissioned report 'Parks in Crisis', released in April, which found that the funding for protected areas of Cape York was 'grossly inadequate'.

However, funding for the Wild Rivers initiative (see Green Pages in *Wild* no 96) was left out of the budget. The legislation, which could protect 19 of Queensland's wild river systems from development, was introduced into Queensland Parliament in May. But without funding, and with loopholes that allow dam building to occur outside the main channel and the major tributaries, it is feared that the legislation will not provide sufficient protection.

Steven Nowakowski reports that further developments are proposed for Oyster Point in northern Queensland's Port Hinchinbrook development including a 350-block canal estate, 18-hole golf course and a motel. In July development applications were being assessed by the Federal and State Governments, as well as by Cardwell Council, and two rock breakwaters protruding 100 metres into the World Heritage Listed Hinchinbrook Channel and State Marine Park had recently been approved. There is serious concern for the sea-grass beds and their resident dugongs, as the additional estate would lead to increased



Looking south over the current development at Oyster Point. More is planned. Steven Nowakowski

boat traffic and the accompanying threat to marine creatures. A successful art exhibition was recently held in Cairns in support of The Alliance to Save Hinchinbrook.

Wood-chips

Further threats to conservation groups

Following on from the Federal Government's decision to cut funding for conservation groups (see *Wild* no 97), environmental groups including TWS are now having their tax-deductible status reviewed. This could end tax rebates for donations, discouraging contributions and affecting the funding for the groups.

Green group greeted with suspicion

The recent launch of the Australian Environment Foundation (AEF)—a new 'solution focused', 'evidence based' green group—was greeted with scepticism by other conservation organisations. According to the *Age* on 8 June the AEF is based at the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA), a right-wing think-tank, with directors including mining and timber industry lobbyists. Don Henry, executive director of the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), said, 'people have to be transparent about who they are...I think in most cases the IPA presents an anti-environment

perspective'. The ACF has requested that the Australian Environment Foundation change its name, saying that the title is 'deceptively similar' to its own. In late July Don Burke (of 'Burke's Backyard' fame) was announced as chairman of the AEF.

The case of the missing logs...

The illegal logging of Snowy River National Park during the 2003 bushfires (see *Wild* no 95) drew scathing criticism from the Auditor-General in his report released in May. The report confirms that the logging was illegal, breaching three separate Acts; that the logs went 'missing' and that the 'fire-break' made the area more fire prone and put fire-fighters' lives at risk. However, no one will be prosecuted for the offences.

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have similar transport needs so that they can share rides, saving money and decreasing pollution in the process. Have a look at the Web site for further information.

'Upgrading' of the Six Foot Track

Lyn Koen reports that the Lands Department and the Rural Fire Service (RFS) have done major work on the Six Foot Track, the Blue Mountains, at Nellies Glen Road. This is claimed to be an upgrading of the road to a 'primary fire track' but seems to exceed the RFS's own guidelines for such work. There isn't evidence of any environmental precautions taken in regard to this work even though it was done next to, and over the top of, two creeks. Nor does there appear to have been an archaeological survey or other consideration of heritage issues. There has been excessive clearing of vegetation and in places the soil has been laid bare, with three metre drains flowing straight from the road into the creek without siltation control. Concerned locals were due to meet with the authorities. 📍

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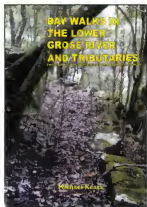
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REVIEWS

Day Walks in the Lower Grose River and Tributaries

by Michael Keats (Michael Keats Holdings, 2004, RRP \$15 and \$1.70 p&p, mjmkeats@easy.com.au).

This is a small but delightful book. It covers a set of day walks in the lower part of the Grose River area of the eastern side of the Blue Mountains. The author, a walks leader in the Sydney-based Bush Club, was given the brief to come up with some new walks.



After much exploration, the results have been compiled into this book. Consequently, many of the walks will be unfamiliar to most bushwalkers. The walk descriptions are quite charming: they are in the form of reports, complete with anecdotes. Photos and maps complement the text. The walks range from easy ones to challenging trips entailing rock scrambling and scrub.

Dave Noble

A Guide to the Flora of Freycinet National Park

by Dick Burns (Dick Burns/Freycinet Park Shop, 2004, RRP \$10.95, [03] 6256 7000).

Covering 31 different plant types this is a handy pocket-sized book that is written in ordinary language. Each double page focuses on a common plant and helps to identify common species, but also includes similar or confusing flora. Many of the plants are found around most of the Tasmanian coastline making this guide useful in other parks as well. A nicely produced and attractively priced booklet for those who wish to stop and learn about the flowers.

John Chapman

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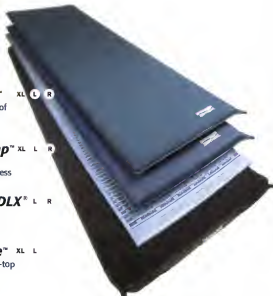
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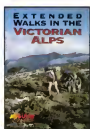
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WILD 19



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